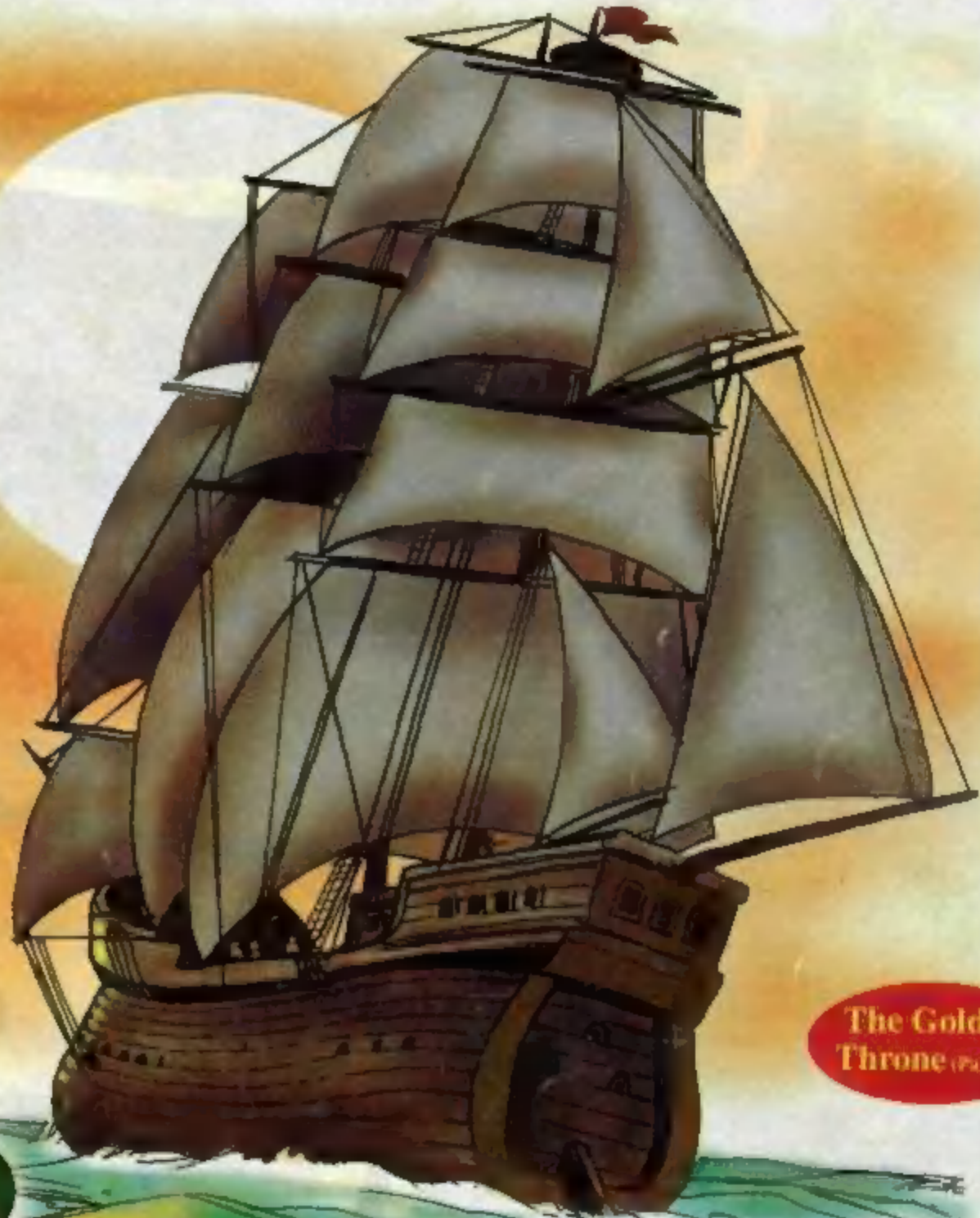


September 2000 - Rs. 1



# CHANDAMAMA



The Golden Throne (page 10)



Inside...

OLYMPICS IN COMIC

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# CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 30

September 2000

No. 9



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**THE NEXT EPISODE OF SAMARITAN SAMIR WILL  
APPEAR NEXT MONTH**

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## HIGHLIGHTS



Olympic  
Games  
(Comics)



Saga of India

The Golden  
Throne



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Editor  
**VISWAM**

Editorial Advisors  
**RUSKIN BOND**  
**MANOJ DAS**

Consultant Editor  
**K. RAMAKRISHNAN**

**ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO**  
Chandamama Magazine  
Division

Chandamama Buildings  
Vadapalani, Chennai-600 026  
Tel/Fax : 4841778/4842087  
e-mail: chandamama@vsnl.com

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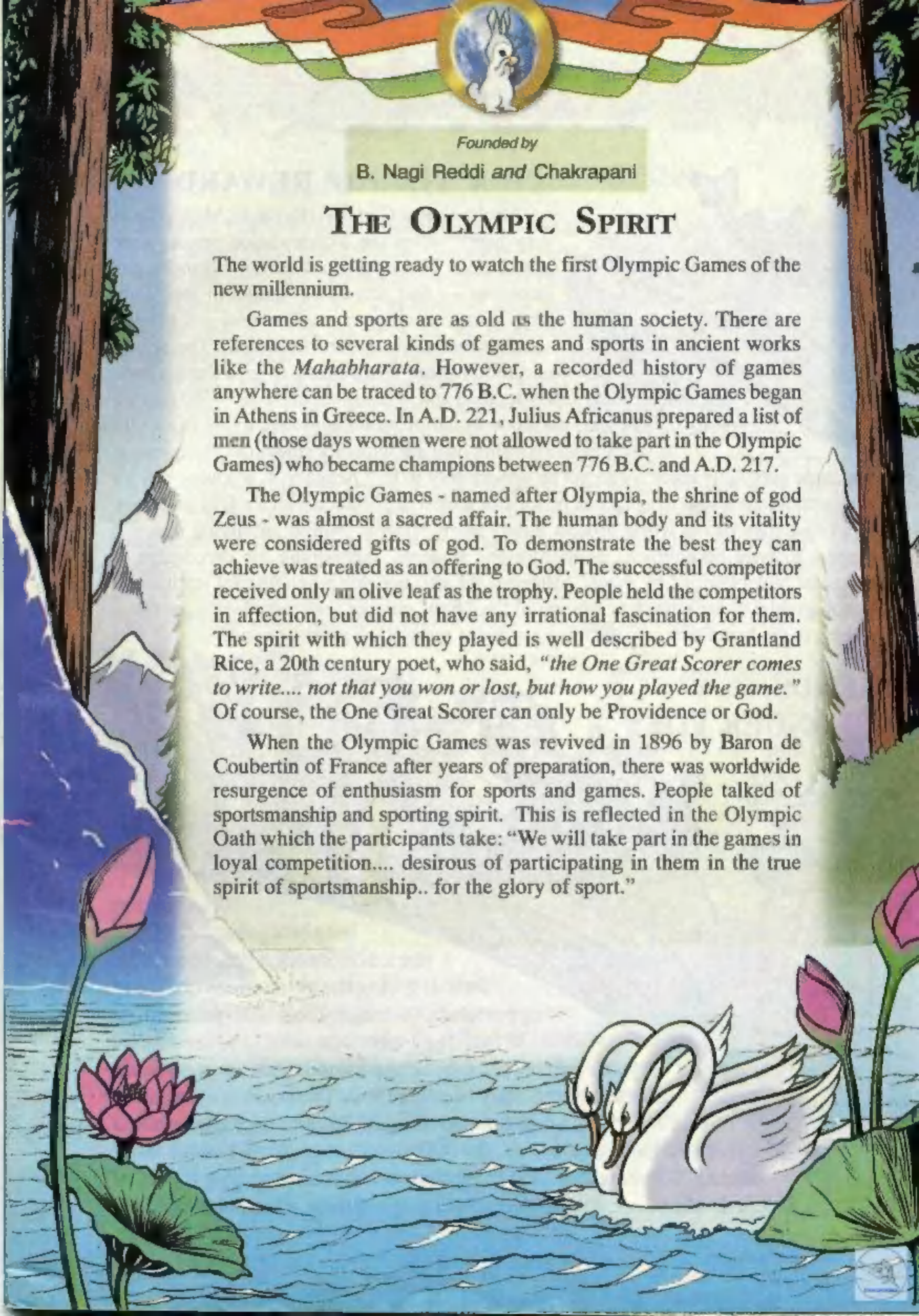
## THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT

The world is getting ready to watch the first Olympic Games of the new millennium.

Games and sports are as old as the human society. There are references to several kinds of games and sports in ancient works like the *Mahabharata*. However, a recorded history of games anywhere can be traced to 776 B.C. when the Olympic Games began in Athens in Greece. In A.D. 221, Julius Africanus prepared a list of men (those days women were not allowed to take part in the Olympic Games) who became champions between 776 B.C. and A.D. 217.

The Olympic Games - named after Olympia, the shrine of god Zeus - was almost a sacred affair. The human body and its vitality were considered gifts of god. To demonstrate the best they can achieve was treated as an offering to God. The successful competitor received only an olive leaf as the trophy. People held the competitors in affection, but did not have any irrational fascination for them. The spirit with which they played is well described by Grantland Rice, a 20th century poet, who said, "*the One Great Scorer comes to write.... not that you won or lost, but how you played the game.*" Of course, the One Great Scorer can only be Providence or God.

When the Olympic Games was revived in 1896 by Baron de Coubertin of France after years of preparation, there was worldwide resurgence of enthusiasm for sports and games. People talked of sportsmanship and sporting spirit. This is reflected in the Olympic Oath which the participants take: "We will take part in the games in loyal competition.... desirous of participating in them in the true spirit of sportsmanship.. for the glory of sport."





# Newsflash



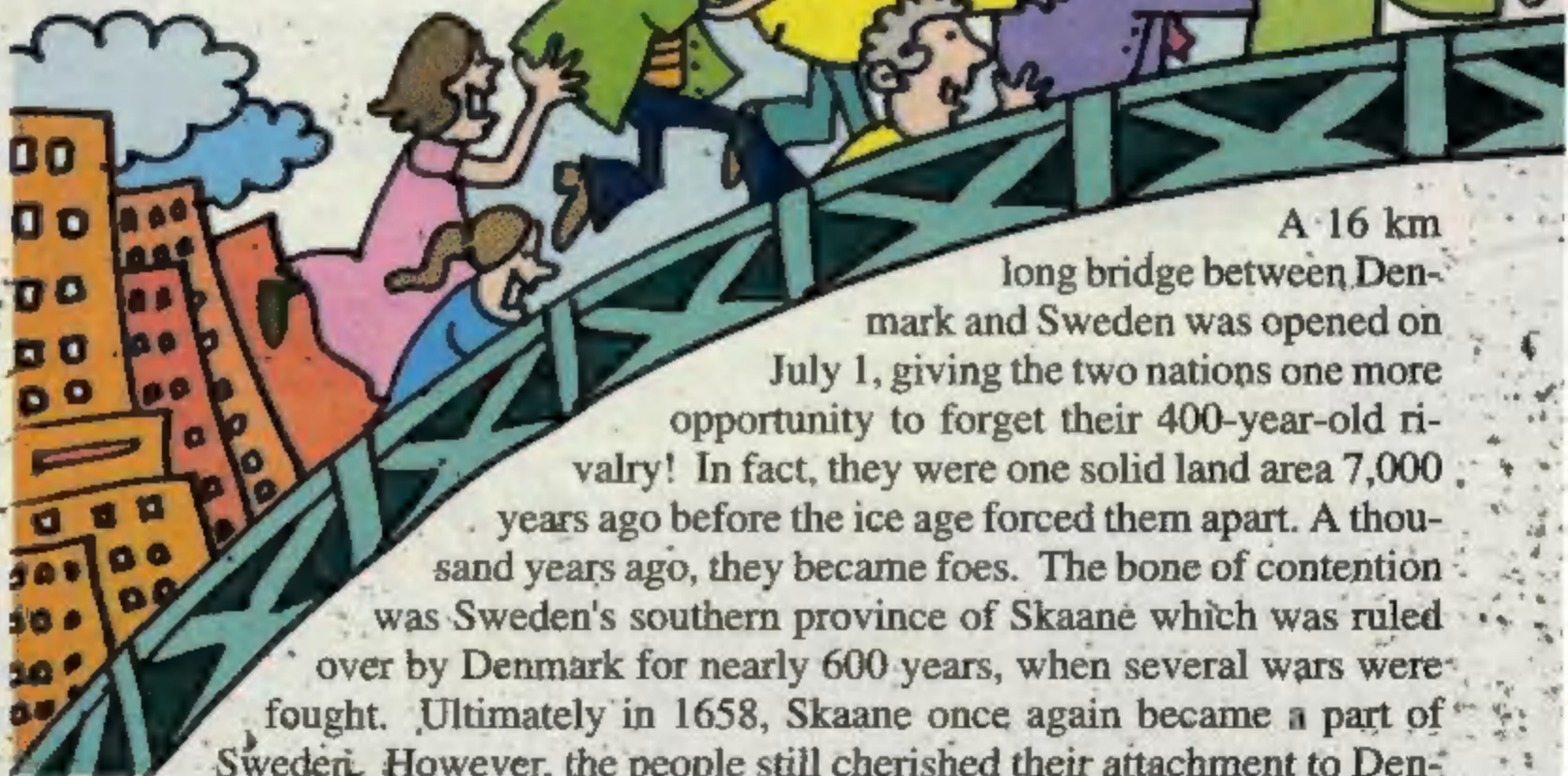
## A 'FLYING' REWARD

A school near Chennai (formerly Madras) was very happy when the Matriculation results were announced. Two of their students — Brindha and Praveena — had scored top marks in their subjects. They were given cash awards and offered scholarships to pursue their studies. The school went a step further, by deciding to give them a holiday in Hyderabad and sending them by air! The reasoning was, the students hail from villages and a free flight will give them an exposure on a par with city students. The question

remains: how many city students do get an opportunity to fly? Another: Is a journey by air more important than a visit to a place of historic or tourist importance which might give them a better knowledge of the world around them? Many schools indulge in buying space in newspapers to print photographs of meritorious students, mentioning the percentage of marks and/or rank obtained by them. Instances are also not rare when tutorial institutions print photographs of rank-holders who would not have entered their premises even once. Who, then, is the beneficiary — the students or the tutorial? A point to ponder.

\*\*\*\*\*

## FRIENDS, NO LONGER FOES



A 16 km long bridge between Denmark and Sweden was opened on July 1, giving the two nations one more opportunity to forget their 400-year-old rivalry! In fact, they were one solid land area 7,000 years ago before the ice age forced them apart. A thousand years ago, they became foes. The bone of contention was Sweden's southern province of Skaane which was ruled over by Denmark for nearly 600 years, when several wars were fought. Ultimately in 1658, Skaane once again became a part of Sweden. However, the people still cherished their attachment to Den-

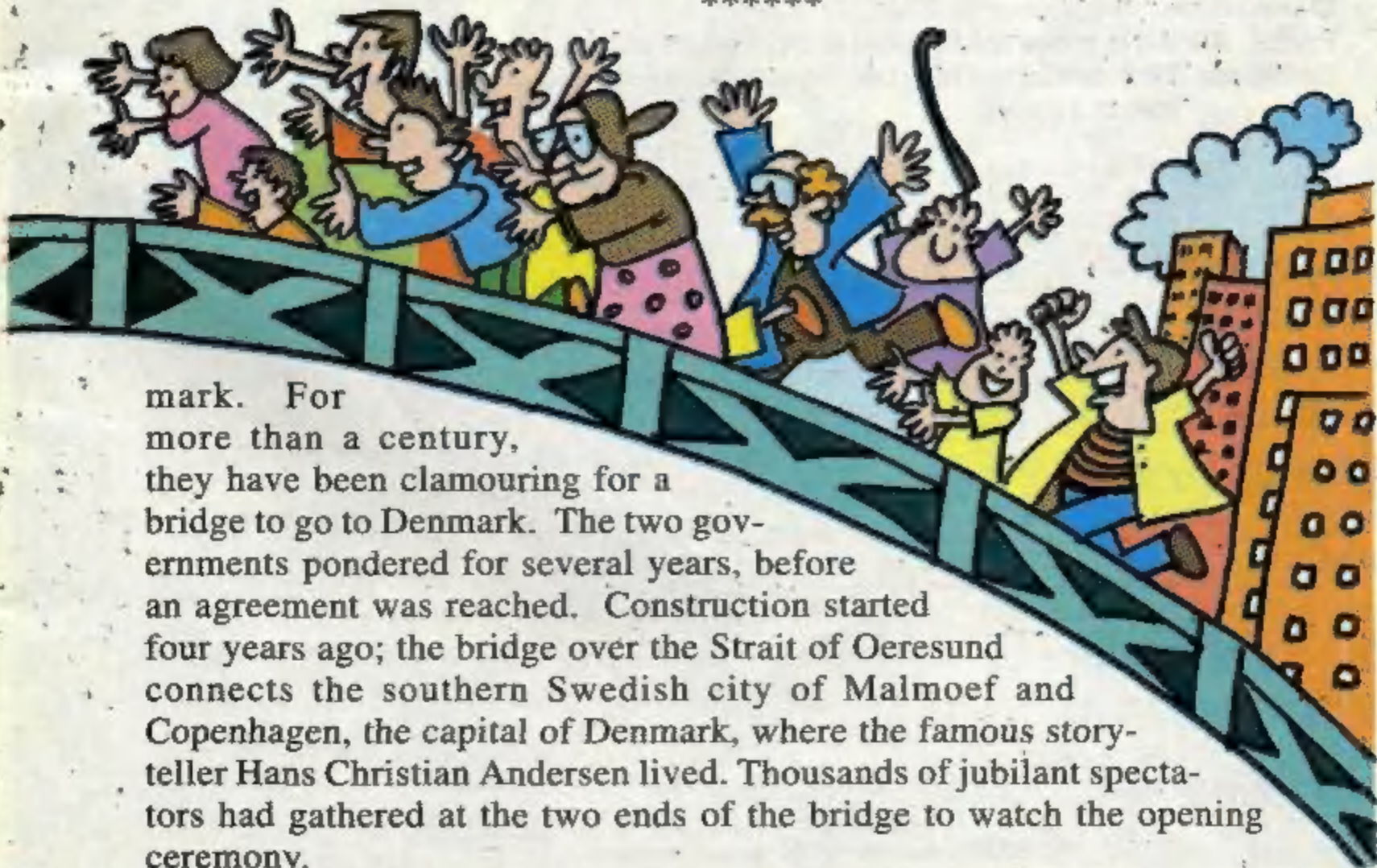


## A NATION APOLOGISES

Fourteen-year-old Aishah Nawawi, daughter of a taxi driver in Bangkok, visited Langkawi, an island in Malaysia, early in June, raising the hope of the people there that a curse cast on them 200 years ago by a Thai beauty would be lifted. She was Mahsuri, and Aishah is her descendant. It is believed that Mahsuri, who was born in Phuket, crossed over to Malaysia (then Malay) in search of a better life. She reached Langkawi where she married a Malay soldier. After he went away to war, the jealous wife of a village chief spread a rumour that Mahsuri had not been faithful to her husband. She was sentenced to death and was stabbed with a ceremonial knife. Her blood was seen to be white, proving that she was innocent. Before she died, she cursed that the island would not see the birth of a female child for seven generations. Soon after that, Siam (now Thailand) invaded Malay when Mahsuri's only son and other members of her family went back to Phuket. Malaysia accorded a grand welcome to Aishah who was offered, besides a national apology, citizenship, a house, and employment. People, overtaken by superstition, crowded around her when she visited Mahsuri's tomb in the island.

\*\*\*\*\*

mark. For more than a century, they have been clamouring for a bridge to go to Denmark. The two governments pondered for several years, before an agreement was reached. Construction started four years ago; the bridge over the Strait of Oeresund connects the southern Swedish city of Malmö and Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, where the famous storyteller Hans Christian Andersen lived. Thousands of jubilant spectators had gathered at the two ends of the bridge to watch the opening ceremony.







Invitation to  
**writers and artists**  
among children



**Chandamama November 2000 issue  
will be a CHILDREN's special.**

**The pages of the magazine are being thrown open  
to children below 16 years.**

**Writings:** They may send their original stories of 100 to 1,000 words along with a catchy title. A participant may send upto **THREE** stories in English, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, Kannada or Tamil.

**Paintings:** They may send **THREE** drawings/paintings based on a well-known incident in Indian mythology/history (to be explained in writing). Those sending entries which come up to our expectations will be asked to come to Chennai (all expenses paid) during the Navaratri holidays to illustrate the stories chosen for the special number.

**Closing date :** September 18, 2000.

**Prizes:** Attractive prizes will be given to meritorious efforts.

**Certificate:** Each participant may use the accompanying coupon for a certificate from the parent.


Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Age / Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Class : \_\_\_\_\_ School : \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address : \_\_\_\_\_  
Pin Code : \_\_\_\_\_  
Description of entries:  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that the entries mentioned alongside are the original, unaided work of my son/daughter.

Signature of child \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Parent \_\_\_\_\_







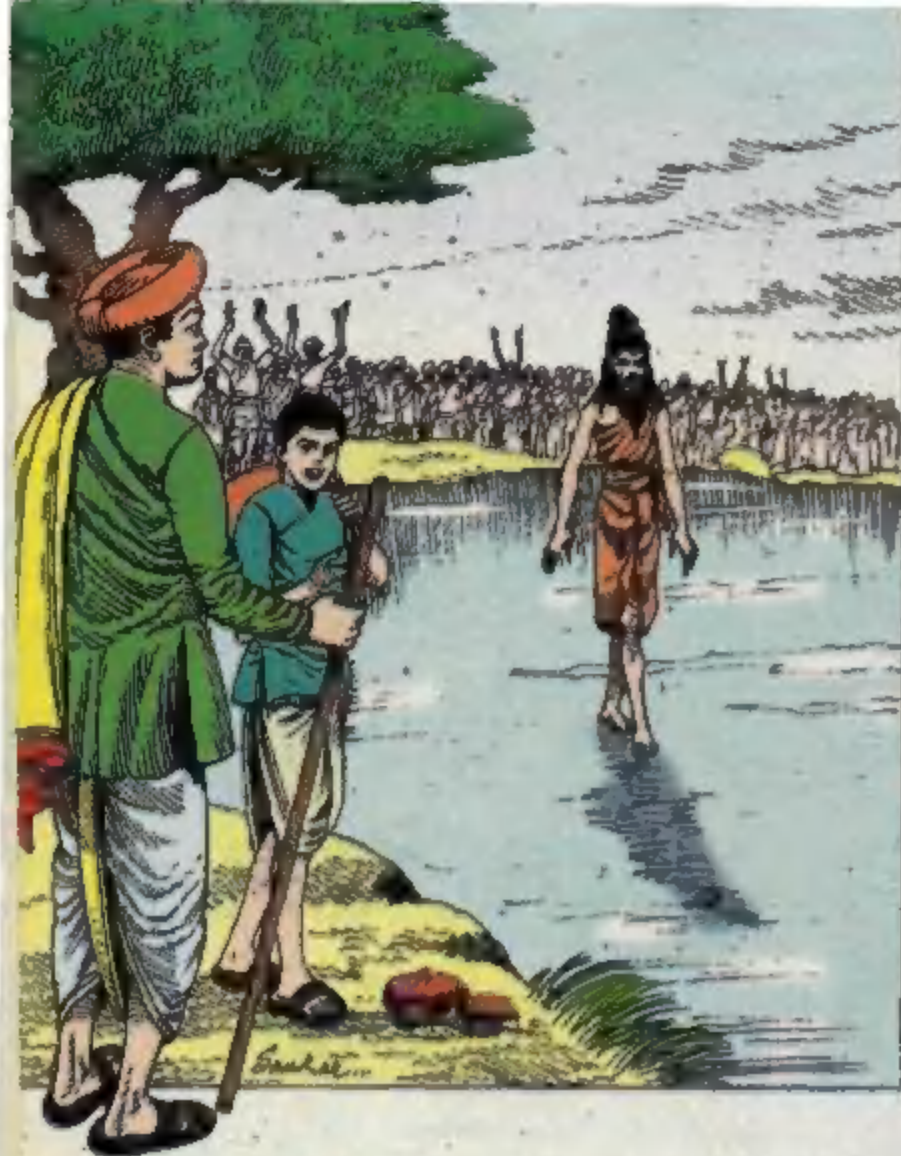
New tales of  
King Vikram  
and the Vetala

## The Noble Soul

Dark was the night and the atmosphere. It rained time to time. Gusts of wind shook the nearby forest. Between thunderclaps and moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie sounds of laughter of spirits.

But King Vikram swore not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, the corpse lying on his shoulder the Vetala that possessed the corpse said: "O King, you are an able and worthy ruler of a great kingdom. There must





many seers, pundits, and experts of all kinds in your country. You must have noticed that the several experts explain the same thing in many different ways. When that happens, a king has to accept the words of the person who has been able to express his ideas clearly and well. Or perhaps, he would accept the explanation he agrees with the most. In such a situation, it is possible that an unworthy or ignorant person gains importance, because his ideas have been accepted. Let me tell you a story to show what I mean."

The Vetala began the narration:

Many years ago, in the kingdom of Bhuvanagiri ruled by the great king Nayasagar, a man called Pundit

Visvanath ran a famous gurukul. He was well known for his knowledge of grammar, law, and justice.

One day, Visvanath received a message from the king asking him to meet him urgently. So, the next day, he set out for the capital along with one of his disciples called Kanakasharma.

They reached Kashipur in the evening and decided to stay put for the night at an inn in the village. The next day, they walked up to a lake near the village. There was a big crowd. Everyone's gaze was focused on the centre of the lake where there was a mound of sand. They were waiting for a miracle which used to happen every year on the full moon day of the month of Shravan.

Suddenly, an excited murmur arose from the crowd. There were cries of wonder and awe as a holy man, Swami Vimalananda, emerged from the centre of the lake and walked across the water towards the shore. Kanakasharma was awe-struck at the sight and considered himself very lucky to have witnessed the miracle.

Soon Pundit Visvanath and Kanakasharma continued their journey to the capital. On the way, they had to walk through a forest. They decided to stop at an ashram that they came across in the middle of the forest. It was the ashram of a great seer





called Sharabha Muni. At the ashram, they saw a huge sacred fire burning in the middle of the main courtyard. The people of the ashram told them that the Muni planned to enter the fire early the next day and that was why the fire was kept burning all night.

The next morning, the Muni entered the fire and stayed in samadhi for an hour. When the seer came out of the fire, his whole body shone with a golden light that made him look divine. Those who were watching this miracle were spellbound with wonder. Kanakasharma once again felt he was really very lucky to witness such a sight. His guru, however, said nothing.

Once again they set off for the capital. This time their path took them over hills and mountains. After a while, they came to a village called Rajdurg. They found the village in the grip of a drought. It had not rained for many months. The people were dying of hunger and thirst.

However, a young man from the village, Ramesh, turned out to be their saviour. He got together a band of enthusiastic young people from the village and organised them for providing help to the hungry and starving. He collected grain and money from the neighbouring areas and opened centres from where food and other material could be distributed to those who needed them. Thus many



of the villagers were saved from death.

Even so, many people died from starvation. In fact, an old woman collapsed right in front of Pundit Visvanath and Kanakasharma. Ramesh was inconsolable that he could not save her.

"Did you send a message about this drought to the king?" asked Pundit Visvanath. "You should have asked for help from him."

Ramesh said: "We sent a message as soon as we realised that there was a threat of drought and asked for help. But maybe, in such a large kingdom, there are many places that need help; maybe that's why the king did not respond. He has so many people and





places to look after.”

Pundit Visvanath sensed that Ramesh was feeling very bitter and disillusioned, because there had been no help for the people from the king. However, he said nothing to him and proceeded to the capital with his disciple.

When they arrived at the capital, King Nayasagar welcomed Pundit Visvanath with great respect and warmth. Visvanath told him all that he had seen on the way. He praised Ramesh and the tremendous work he had done. He then requested the king to send help to the drought-stricken area immediately.

The king listened to all that Pundit Visvanath had to say. He said: “In

our kingdom, there are many noble souls. It is very difficult to decide who is the noblest. My officers have collected information about many such people. I’m giving all those papers to you. Please see if you can decide who is the noblest. That’s why I asked you to come over.” He then handed some papers and letters to the Pundit.

Pundit Visvanath read the papers the king gave him. He said: “Your Majesty, please send help to Ramesh’s village. The people are under great stress. Many of them may not live if help doesn’t reach them immediately. Ramesh is doing his best to save your starving subjects, but how much can he achieve by himself? True he has some youngsters to extend a helping hand, but he has to bear the brunt of the exercise alone. In my view, in the entire kingdom, he is the only noblest soul. You should reach help to him at once, your majesty!”

The Vetala stopped his story there and asked Vikramaditya : “O King! According to the people and King Nayasagar, Pundit Visvanath was a great scholar and teacher; yet in my view, he didn’t deserve that reputation. He seems to me to be quite ignorant and stupid. With his own eyes he saw two great miracles by two great souls. They seemed to have divine powers which only result from hard work and

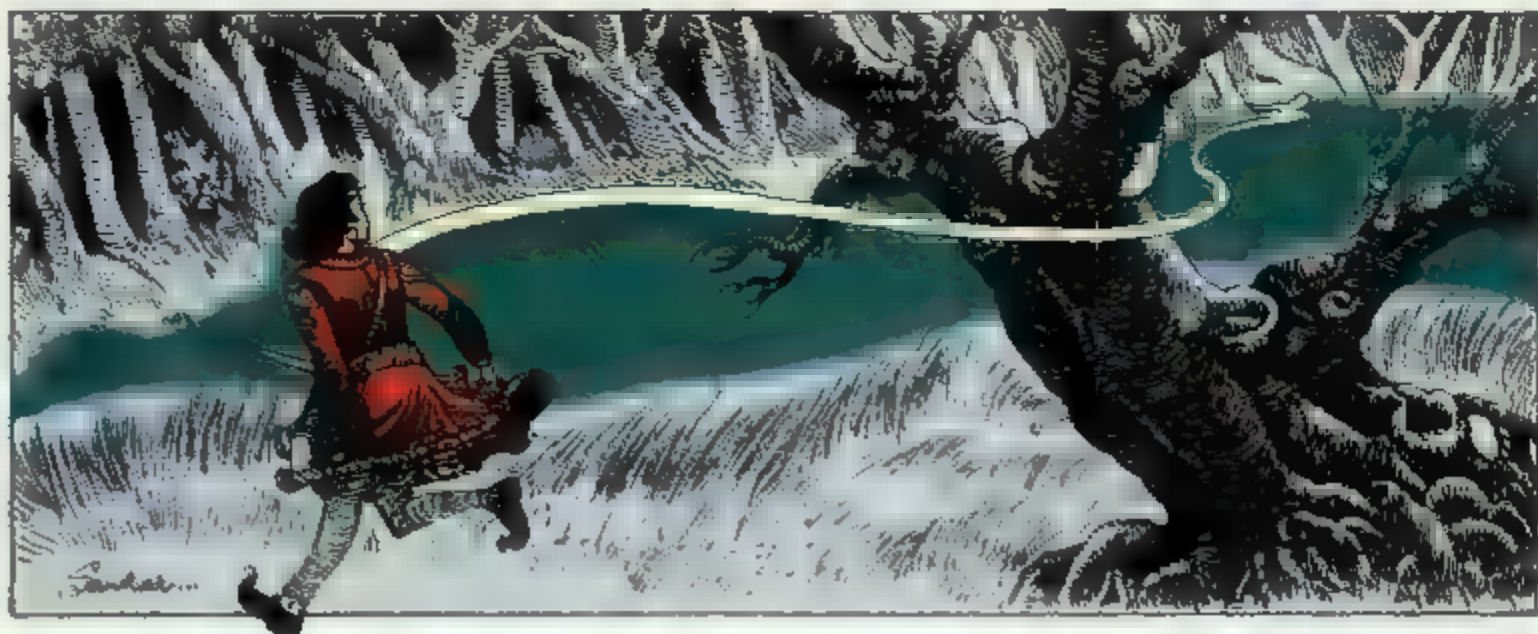


great faith. Yet, he did not call either of them a great soul, in the kingdom. Isn't that sheer ignorance? What is a poor farmer when you compare him with those great sages? If you know the answer but refuse to speak, your head will roll off your neck and break into tiny pieces!"

King Vikram spoke up at once : "Your thinking is illogical, faulty, and false. You've been taken in and are impressed by the miracles of the yogis Swami Vimalananda and Sharabha Muni. Have you thought seriously about what these miracle-making yogis do for their fellowmen? Don't they perform miracles only for fame and to boost themselves? They perform such miracles or magic to impress innocent and simple folks who then think they are great and noble. With their miracles, they wouldn't be able to save a single starving soul or help anyone in trouble. But Ramesh, with his selfless work and compassionate soul,

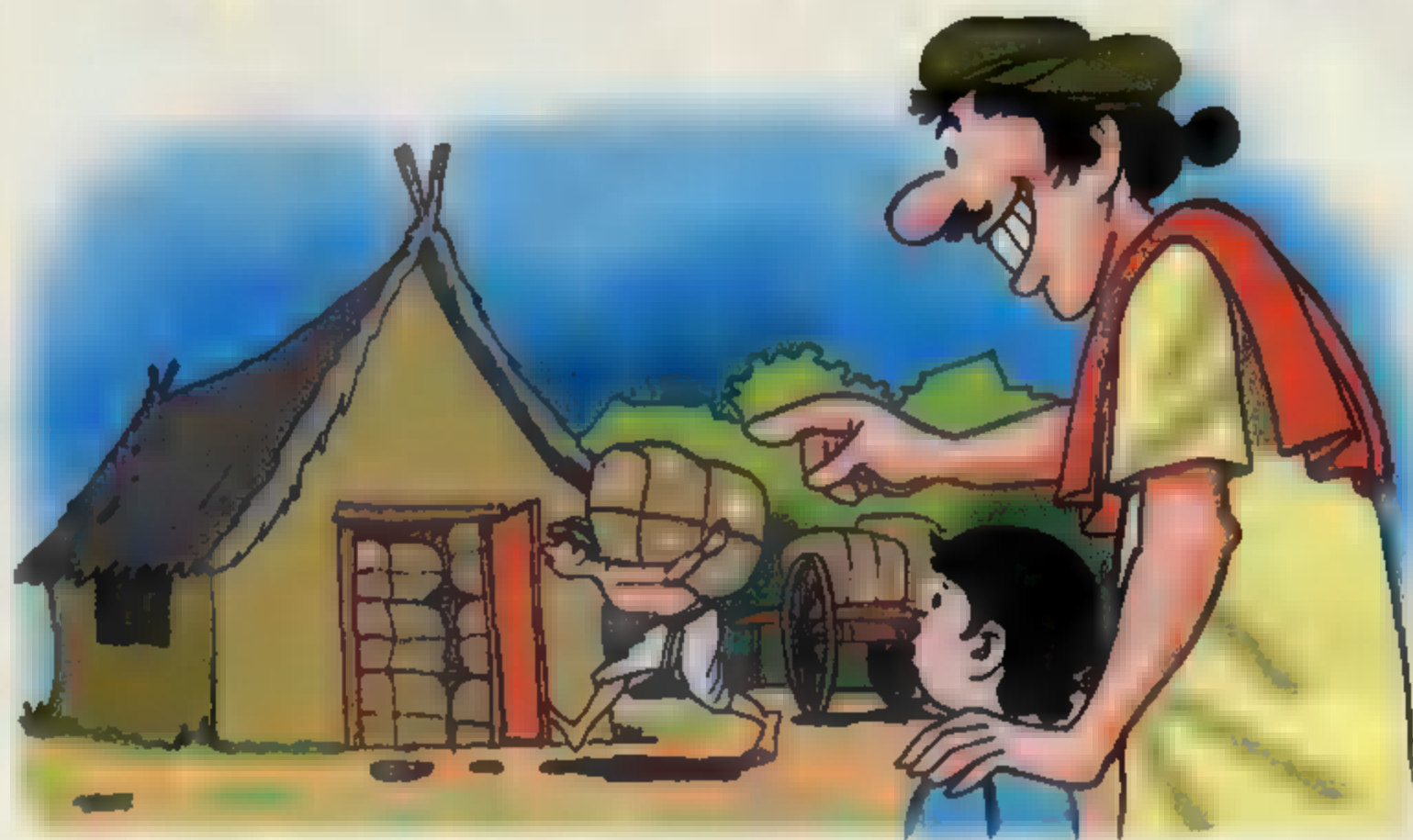
was able to save so many people from death. The powers of yogis are nothing compared to the humaneness and concern displayed by Ramesh. He did not go to save those people thinking he would become famous or would be rewarded. He did it because he was a good man, ■ noble soul, who felt for his fellow beings. The yogis did what they could to demonstrate their skill and prowess, so that they would win fame and renown. Their actions did nothing good for humanity. Serving humanity is the best way of serving God, and those who do it are truly noble souls. So, I think, Pundit Visvanath was entirely right when he pointed at Ramesh as the noblest soul in the kingdom."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the Vetala, along with the corpse, gave him the slip. The king drew his sword and went after the vetala to the ancient tree.





# “My father is not in the loft”



A merchant named Chinnappa lived in a town in South India with his wife and little son. Chinnappa was very proud of him. The toddler would say the cutest of things, and Chinnappa took delight in making him repeat his prattle in front of all his friends.

Chinnappa traded in cotton and cottonseeds. Once a fellow trader told him that a large quantity of cotton of good quality was on sale in the next town and he could get it very cheap if he paid for it in cash. So Chinnappa borrowed money from a moneylender, promising to pay it back in three months. He then went and bought all that cotton. He was very happy with his bargain. “I’ll store this cotton till

the prices rise next month, and I’ll then sell it and make a large profit,” he told his wife. The next day he went to town and hired a large barn with a good thatch roof to store the cotton.

Unfortunately, the next month there was a terrible cyclone. It ripped through the town and uprooted many trees. One tree fell on the godown where Chinnappa had stored his cotton and made a big hole on the roof. The rain poured in and all the cotton got wet.

“Oh, what’ll I do now?” Chinnappa moaned to his wife. “I’ve to pay rent for the godown and in another month I’ve to pay back the moneylender all his money. He’s tough and may not listen to any excuse.”



His wife said: "I've an idea. Why don't you go away from here till you can gather the money for the moneylender? In fact, you can go to our relatives in the north. You know they keep asking you to visit them. You can request them to lend you the money. I'm sure they'll oblige when they know the trouble you are in."

"Yes, I can get the money from them to tide me over for a month or two. I think I'll pay them a visit," decided Chinnappa.

So he went off to their relatives. Before he left, he told his little son:

"I'm going away for a few days. When I come back, I'll bring lots of presents for you. Be a good boy till then."

The moneylender came to ask for his money at the end of three months, and Chinnappa's wife told him he was away and would be back in a week.

Chinnappa's little son, hanging on to his mother's sari, said: "Yes, and he'll bring many gifts for me when he comes back. He said so."

The moneylender smiled at the little boy, but told Chinnappa's wife that the

money should be ready for him in a week's time and went away.

When the moneylender came back after a week, he got the same answer. He was very upset and told Chinnappa's wife that if the money was not brought to his shop in three days, he would have to send his henchmen to collect the money.

Chinnappa came back that night stealthily when no one could see him. His wife asked him whether he had had the money. When he said he hadn't, she told him, "I don't know what you're

going to do; the moneylender and his henchmen will be here in three days."

Chinnappa planned to go away again. The moneylender's men, however, had been keeping an eye on Chinnappa's house. Instead of waiting for three days, the moneylender and his henchmen knocked on the door the very next morning. Chinnappa was trapped. He knew that if he didn't return the money, he would be beaten to a pulp.





He told his wife: "I'm going to hide in the loft. See if you can send those ruffians away." Chinnappa's son saw all this with wide eyes.

The henchmen, in the meantime, got impatient and banged on the door, fit to call up all the devils in hell. Chinnappa's wife opened the door and looked out asking, "Who are you? Why are you breaking down the door?"

"I want to see Chinnappa. I know he came back last night and is in the house," the moneylender said angrily.

"He's not here in the house. You can look if you want," said Chinnappa's wife with a confidence she was far from feeling.

The little boy followed the men

around as they looked through the rooms of the house. Suddenly — maybe he thought he would help his father with the game the grown ups were playing — he said: "My father is not up in the loft."

The moneylender looked up at the loft and then looked at the innocent child. Suddenly, the funny side of the whole thing struck him and he started laughing. He laughed so hard that everyone around first started smiling and then laughing. Finally, with tears streaming down his face, he told Chinnappa's wife: "You better ask that man of yours to come down. Tell him that I'll give him another month."

He then went out chuckling: "My father is not in the loft .... my father is not in the loft!"







## THE GOLDEN THRONE

*[The story so far: Prince Vijayadatta of Kaundinya is about to ascend the golden throne retrieved from a pit dug near the palace. On the steps are female figurines. They come to life and tell him that he will have to give satisfactory answers to some riddles before he can go up and sit on the throne. He pleases the first two damsels with his wise answers. The third one narrates the story of King Nyaya Vardhana. Prince Kumarasetu from the neighbouring kingdom has arrived to learn law and justice from Nyaya Vardhana, who listens to people who go to him with grievances. Farmer Swami comes forward with a complaint against his friend Chandra.*

*Read on...)*

Chandra bowed to King Nyaya Vardhana and said: "Whatever Swami has said is basically true, but in order to build his case, he has so cunningly woven in lies that the truth has got completely hidden. Listening to him anyone would be forgiven for thinking that I've ill-treated him and taken advantage of his position." He paused for a while and continued :

"It's true, your majesty, that Swami

and I were childhood friends. It's also true, to deepen the bonds of our friendship, we had agreed that my daughter Lakshmi would marry his son. But I did not change my mind just because Swami is poor and I'm rich, though our attitudes, our lifestyles, and values are very different.

"My wife Janaki is very hard-working, smart, and thoughtful. She always has the good of the family at heart. She

### 9. A MERCHANT'S PLEA FOR JUSTICE



spends half of what I earn to run the household and saves the other half. She also finds time to do some work outside the house to earn a little money. She deposits the money that we both save wisely, so that in turn it earns a little more for us. It is only her intelligence and ability that has made us



wealthy today. I've learnt to work hard from my wife. Following our example, my daughter also works hard. The three of us aim to work hard and make greater progress in our life.

"Swami and his wife Kanaka, however, lead their lives very differently. Kanaka doesn't enjoy working hard or

believe in saving for a rainy day. Their children are also lazy and haven't been brought up with the values we cherish. So, their family has not been able to make the kind of progress that we have.

"At first we did not really bother about their wealth or status. As we had made our word, I tried to change Swami's son, Sarang, and teach him to work hard. But our efforts have had no effect on him and he continued in his old ways. Besides, his mother feels that we are unnecessarily hard on him because they are poor. In fact, she accuses us of trying to estrange their son from them. Ultimately, we gave up trying to change his attitudes and decided to break our agreement.

"Sarang is now sixteen years old and yet he's very irresponsible. He keeps bad company. He spends the whole day drinking and gambling with his friends. Yet his parents don't reproach him at all. How can I give my daughter to such a person? How can I ruin her life for the sake of a promise? Like any father, I would like to see her happy. Looking at the situation, the rest of the elders in the village and others also agree with me. They know if Lakshmi gets married to Sarang, her life will be ruined. But Swami has twisted the facts and says that the people in the village support me because he is poor and I'm rich. Nothing can be farther from the truth. What we have contempt



for is not his poverty but the fact that he has brought up his son ■ a good-for-nothing youth.”

The king listened to Chandra attentively and then glanced keenly at the two friends. Chandra was dressed simply but neatly. He looked calm and peaceful. Swami, on the other hand, wore torn and dirty clothes. His eyes were full of fear and discontent.

He opened his mouth to protest, but the king waved at him to keep quiet and then asked Chandra: “Have you got anyone else in mind for your daughter?”

“Your majesty, I haven’t yet told anyone of my intentions, but now that you have asked me, I shall tell you everything frankly. My brother-in-law has a young son, almost as old as Sarang. He’s a good boy and in every way ■ suitable match for my daughter. He’s good-natured, educated, and hard working. He doesn’t have any bad habits. I know he’ll make my Lakshmi very happy. His parents have agreed to the match, and the boy and girl, too, have consented.”

Swami appeared upset over Chandra’s words and once again tried to speak. But the king did not allow him to say anything more. He said: “I’ve listened carefully to you both. Now you may take your seats and await my decision.”

After that, a trader called Manikarna walked up to present his

plea to the king. “Your majesty, I’m from Sinha Islands, a little distance from here. My father was ■ famous and rich merchant. He wanted me to follow in his footsteps, and so I started helping him out in the business, though I was not really interested in the kind of trade he did. Therefore, I spent most of my



time with my friends. My father died suddenly and I had to take over the entire business and look after it myself. Many of my father’s friends helped and guided me. I also tried to do my best to run the business well. However, my interest lay in import and export and my ambition was to become a sea trader.





My well-wishers and my mother did not want me to venture out in this new field, but I was convinced that there is a lot of money in sea trade, besides it also seemed more romantic and adventuresome. Now I think I had made a big mistake.

"I bought a lot of goods like incense, coconut, coir, and ivory from another island quite cheap, loaded them on a merchant ship, and set out to trade. I also collected a lot of other goods from shops during the voyage. It was all smooth-sailing and I was convinced that I would become a great sea merchant.

"Soon we approached the kingdom

of Subhadra. Some of my fellow travellers and traders wanted to stop there to sell some of their merchandise. They advised me that I should do the same, because they felt that the goods I had would fetch a good price. My ship was due to sail after a week. But to sell all my stuff, I felt I would need a few more days. I was told that there were proper godowns available which I could hire for storing my goods. I was pondering this advice and had not quite made up my mind when we anchored at Subhadra. I was wondering what to do when I met Ratnagupta." Manikarna pointed to a man standing close by. As soon as the king turned to look at him, Ratnagupta got up and bowed. He was a clever and experienced merchant of Subhadra. The king gave him a keen look and then nodded to Manikarna to continue.

"Your majesty, Ratnagupta is truly a very adept trader. Seeing my confusion, he sensed that I was new to the trade. He came to me at once and introduced himself and asked me about my business. I told him about all my activities, frankly. I did not suspect his intentions at all. Perhaps that was my second mistake.

"After having learnt all about me and my business, he affectionately took me aside and said, 'My son, it's not possible to sell all your goods in a week. Besides, you're from another country



and the local people will cheat you. It'll take you awhile to understand our market and deal with it effectively. Hiring a godown will be costly and you can do that only after you get permission from the king. And getting permission from the king will take some time. As soon as I saw you, I was drawn to you. I really can't explain why. I'm also a merchant and I've a large area where you can store your goods. It'll be quite safe there and I'll be only too happy if you stay at my house as my guest. You can stay as long you like and sell your goods at leisure.'

"Listening to him, I felt God had sent him to help me. I didn't suspect him of having any motives other than trying to help me. I unloaded my goods from the ship and took them straight to his house. There his servants stored them in a large room. Ratnagupta then locked the room and gave me the key. His affection made me feel that my father's spirit had come down from heaven to help and support me in this foreign land. I was delighted.

"After a bath and sumptuous meal, I went to sleep. I was very tired from the journey. In the evening, Ratnagupta took me out to dinner and to a night club. When my father was alive I used to go to such places, but after his death, when I had to look after the business, I stopped visiting such places and hadn't been to such a place for a long

time. I got drunk at the club and spent a lot of time there. Ratnagupta didn't drink at all and merely watched everything quietly. In fact, he wanted to leave early, but stayed on for my sake. He paid for everything that night; he wouldn't allow me to spend any money.

"On our way back, he said, 'Manikarna, you'll have to take a lot of trouble to sell your wares. I would like to help you out. Why don't you sell your stuff to me and then you can leave for home early? My trade is in different items but I should be able to make





a little profit by retailing your goods. What do you think?' I was quite drunk and his suggestion seemed ■ good idea. Without dwelling on it too much, I agreed.

"The next morning I got up and, after breakfast, broached the subject with Ratnagupta: 'I know you offered to buy all my goods because you want to help me. I trust you implicitly. But I'd like to know why you want to take the risk and buy all my goods. If you are certain that you want to buy all my stuff, I would like you to pay me half the sum right away because I've very little money left with me now.'

"He got offended when he heard me and said a little stiffly, 'I haven't valued your goods properly yet and don't know what their worth is. Yet I'm willing to buy all the stuff from you. I'll find out what your stuff is worth from the bazaar today. In the meantime, here is ten thousand rupees. That's all I have now with me. As this is a business deal, we must have a written agreement.

Why don't you sign on this paper? When I get the time I shall have the agreement written out properly.'

"He then handed over the money and a piece of paper to me. I took the money and signed on the paper. After that Ratnagupta went off to attend to his affairs and I set out to take a look

at the city. I wandered around the market, eager to find out the value of my merchandise.

"To my surprise, I found that the value on my goods here was some ten times more than in my own country. I was told that if I waited for a month for the Spring Festival, the goods would then sell at ■ even higher price.

"This information really upset me. I regretted striking a

deal with Ratnagupta without finding out the value of the merchandise I held. I felt sure in my mind that Ratnagupta had befriended me in order to cheat me. When I enquired about Ratnagupta in the market area, I was told that he was an honourable and honest man. I didn't know what to think and went





back with my mind in total confusion.

"Back home Ratnagupta was waiting for me. As soon as he saw me, he asked: 'Where did you go away all alone?'"

"I told him all that I had learnt and asked him directly, 'Please tell me, sir, how much value have you placed on my goods and how much are you going to pay me?'"

"As soon as he heard me, Ratnagupta expressed surprise and said: 'What are you saying, Manikarna? I paid you forty thousand rupees for your merchandise. Here's the receipt signed by you. Have you forgotten?' And he showed me the piece of paper I had signed.

"The paper was no longer blank, but it had a receipt for forty thousand rupees written on it. I had signed the blank paper in good faith, but Ratnagupta had taken advantage of my

trust, innocence, and inexperience and cheated me. I was helpless. I complained bitterly to the other merchants. But I had no proof of his wrongdoing, and everyone thought I was making it all up. No one believed me because Ratnagupta was known to be an honest man. Even the key to the storeroom that Ratnagupta gave me has disappeared.

"I regret my foolishness and stupidity. I should never have trusted a man I didn't know, no matter what his reputation or appearance. Now, my only hope is your court and I've come to you for justice. I've come with the hope that you won't allow a helpless foreigner to be cheated in your country."

The king turned to Ratnagupta. "What have you to say?"

(To continue)







Owl

Tales

afraid of man nor is it strictly a night bird. But it prefers to stay at home during the day as it is sometimes attacked by other birds who consider all owls

O n e winter morning, my grandfather and I found a baby spotted owl by the verandah steps of our home in Dehra Dun. When Grandfather picked it up, the owllet hissed and clacked its bill but, after a meal of raw meat and water, it settled down under my bed.

Spotted owllets are small birds. A fully grown one is no bigger than a thrush and they have none of the sinister appearance of larger owls. I had often found a pair of them in our mango tree and, by tapping on the tree trunk, had persuaded one to show an enquiring face at the entrance to its hole. The owllet is not normally

as their enemies.

The little owllet was quite happy under my bed. The following day we found a second baby owllet at the same spot on the verandah and only then did we realise that where the rainwater pipe emerged through the roof, there was a rough sort of nest from which the birds had fallen. We took the second young owl to join the first and fed them both.

When I went to bed, they were on the window ledge just inside the mosquito netting and later in the night, their mother found them there. From outside, she crooned and gurgled for a long time and, in the morning, I found she had left a mouse with its tail tucked through the netting.



Obviously she put no great trust in me as a foster parent.

The young birds thrived and ten days later, Grandfather and I took them into the garden to release them. I had placed one on a branch of the mango tree and was stooping to pick up the other when I received a heavy blow on the back of the head. A second or two later, the mother owl swooped down on Grandfather but he was quite agile and ducked out of the way.

Quickly, I placed the second owl under the mango tree. Then from a safe distance we watched the mother fly down and lead her offspring

into the long grass at the edge of the garden.

We thought she would take her family away from our rather strange household, but the next morning I found the two owlets perched on the hat stand in the verandah.

I ran to tell Grandfather and when we came back we found the mother sitting on the birdbath a few metres away. She was evidently feeling sorry for her behaviour the previous day because she greeted us with a soft "whoo-whoo".

"Now there's an unselfish mother

for you," said Grandfather. "It's obvious she wants us to keep an eye on them. They're probably getting too big for her to manage."

So the owlets became regular members of our household and were among the few pets that Grandmother took a liking to. She objected to all snakes, most monkeys, and some crows - we had had all these pets from time to time - but she took quite a fancy to the owlets and frequently fed them spaghetti.

They seemed to like spaghetti. In fact, the owls became so attached



to Grandmother that they began to display affection towards anyone in a petticoat including my aunt Mabel who was terrified of them. She would run screaming from the room every time one of the little birds sidled up to her in a friendly manner.



Forgetful of the fact that Grandfather and I had reared them, the owls would sometimes swell their feathers and peck at anyone in trousers. To avoid displeasing them, Grandfather would often slip into one of Grandmother's petticoats at feeding time. I compromised by wearing ■ apron and this appeared to satisfy them. In response to grandmother's voice, the owlets made sounds as gentle and soothing as the purring of a cat, but when wild owls were around, ours would rend the night with blood-curdling shrieks.

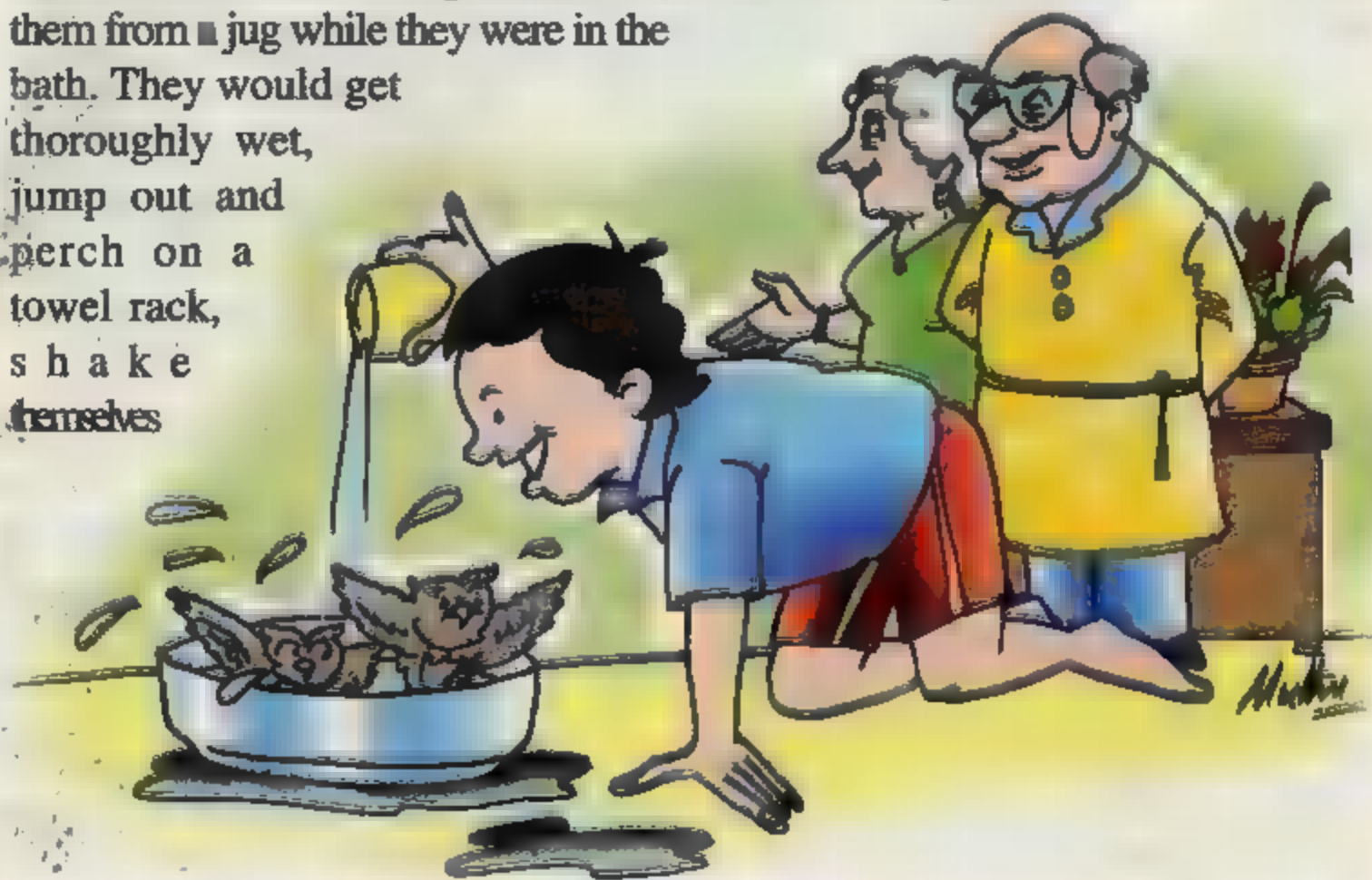
They loved to sit and splash in a shallow dish provided by Grandmother. They enjoyed it even more if cold water was poured over them from ■ jug while they were in the bath. They would get thoroughly wet,

jump out and perch on a towel rack, shake themselves

and return for a second splash and sometimes a third. During the day, they dozed on the hat stand. After dark, they had the freedom of the house and their nightly occupation was catching beetles, the kitchen quarters being a happy hunting ground. With their razor sharp eyes and powerful beaks, they were excellent pest destroyers.

Looking back on those childhood days, I carry in my mind a picture of Grandmother in her rocking chair with a contented owlet sprawled across her aproned lap. Once, on entering a room while she was taking an afternoon nap, I saw that one of the owlets had crawled up her pillow till its head was snuggled under her ear.

Both Grandmother and the owlet were snoring.





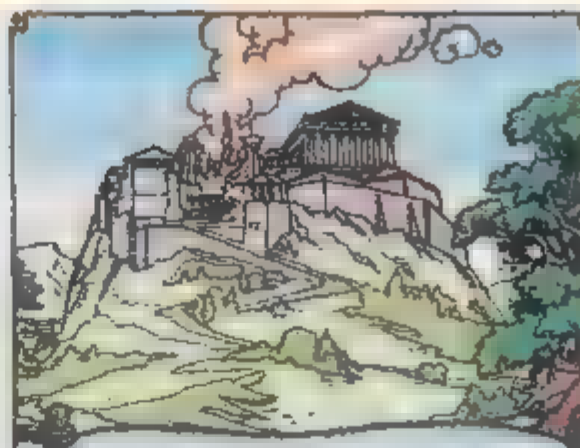


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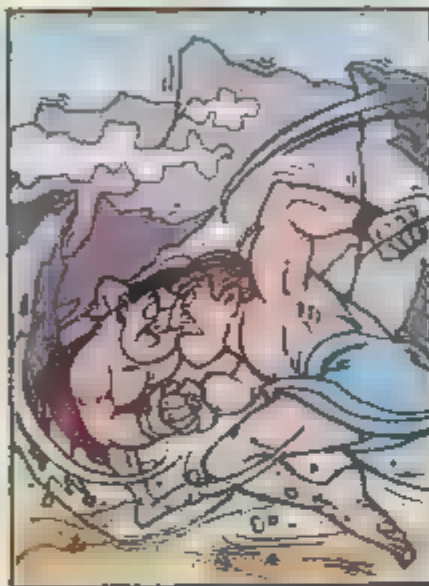
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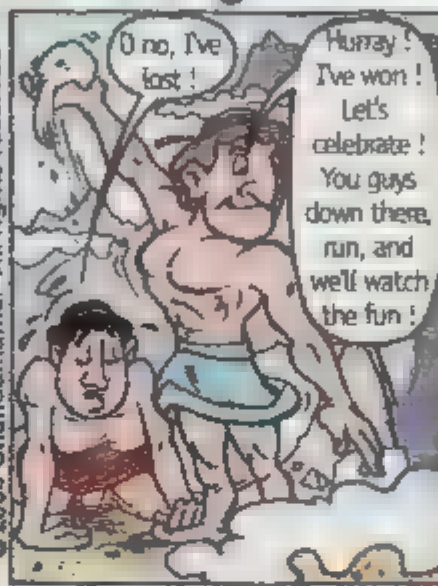


OLYMPIA, in GREECE, the abode of the Greek Gods. Sports festivals were a way of life in Greece as far back as 1370 B.C.

Poets say that the Olympic Games started with a divine battle. Zeus, the Father of the Gods, and Kronos, another Greek God, fought on Mount Olympus for the possession of the earth. Zeus won and threw a great sports party to celebrate.



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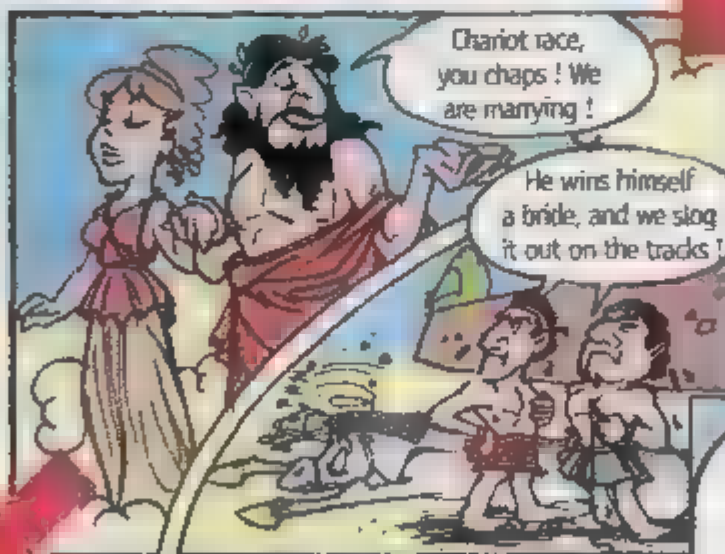
O no, I've lost!

Hurray! I've won! Let's celebrate! You guys down there, run, and we'll watch the fun!

Another legend says that Pelops, the Greek God of Fertility, won the hand of beautiful Hippodamia, after cheating in a near-fatal chariot race. He celebrated with a grand chariot race: and thus the Olympics began.



Some say the Games owed their origin to the worship of Rhea, mother of Gods, at an altar set up for her around 1370 B.C.

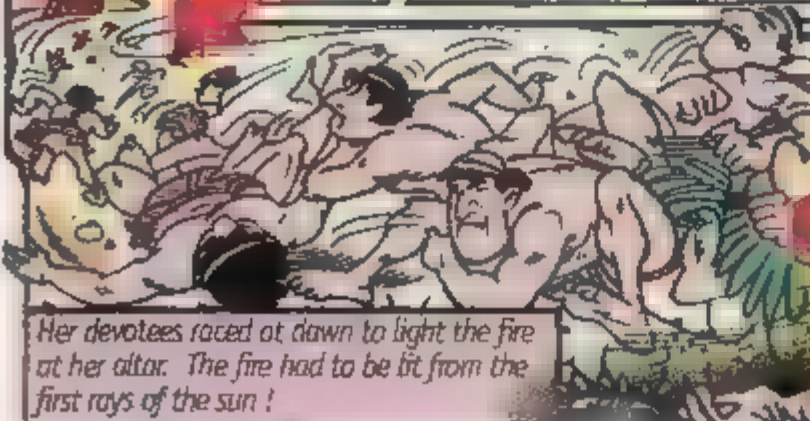


Chariot race, you chaps! We are marrying!

He wins himself a bride, and we slog it out on the tracks!

Greece's most popular hero, Hercules, is also sometimes hailed as the Father of the Olympic Games. King Ageus once hired Hercules to clean out his stables, but once the difficult task was over, the king did not reward him.

The angry Hercules slew Ageus, and celebrated by instituting a sports festival.



Her devotees raced at dawn to light the fire at her altar. The fire had to be lit from the first rays of the sun!



You can't play with a mighty fellow like me, not after making me clean out your stinking stables! The whole country will pay for this!



According to Homer, the blind bard of Greece, the Greeks organised funeral games in honour of the heroic Patroclus, after his death in the Trojan war. These funeral games could also have been the precursor to the Olympic Games!



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Oh no! Another big shot has died! Now we'll all have to race again!



In those days the sports festival was inaugurated by kindling a sacrificial fire in honour of Zeus. The fire would be lit with a torch, which in turn, was lit from the sun's rays. If the sun did not shine on the appointed day, the festival had to wait!



If the games don't start on time, the king will be angry. But if the sun does not come out, the games can't start. And if I complain to God or the king, I'll be axed.



Around 670 B.C., we are told, King Iphitus of Elis, issued a decree banning the taking up of arms during the Games. This enabled even sworn enemies to take to the sports arena without animosity.



You scoundrel, I'll see you later out in the field!

My God, don't send another plague to Elis. All our doctors died in the last one and we can't cope! I promise even enemies will play the games!

Just what made me make such a rash promise?



Somewhere down the ages, a tradition of killing and eating a little boy as a sacrifice to the Gods and heroes of yore was introduced at the Games.



The Olympic Games were recorded for the first time in 776 B.C. when a great stade (foot) race was held. It was won by Coroebus of Elis, who is probably the first recorded Olympic winner!

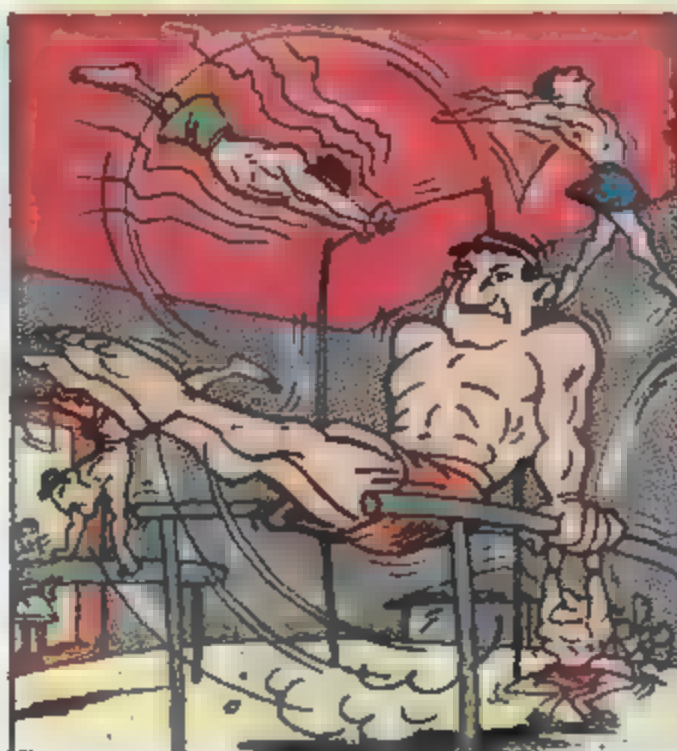


This decree of Iphitus was in the form of a promise carved as a series of rings on a bronze disc at Delphi and exists to this day. The promise was given in return for a favour from the Gods!





The contestants had to compulsorily train for ten months at the Gymnasium at Elis, before the Olympics began.



The ancient Olympic Games were five-day affairs. On the first day, the participants and judges took the oath of fair-dealing, while holding a piece of boar flesh in their hands.



Gymnastic contests were popular, and so was horse-racing...





Another popular event was pentathlon, a special contest to test an athlete's ability in five disciplines: discus throw, javeline throw, running, long jump and wrestling.

Save me from this madhouse, somebody!



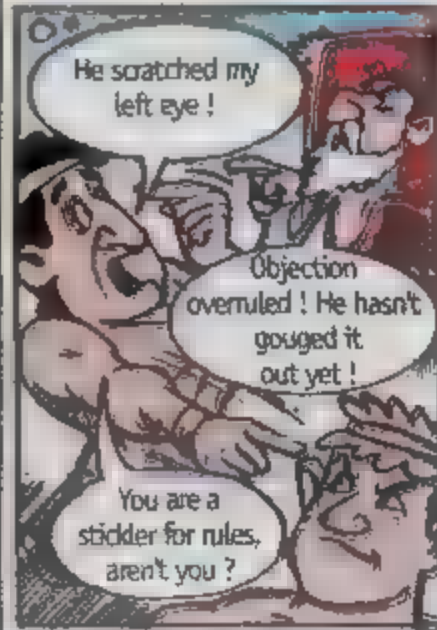
Among the most popular games of the ancient Olympics was wrestling. This was not wrestling as we know of it today. It was called 'Pankration' and combined both wrestling and boxing. The contestants were allowed to do anything except bite, break the rival's fingers or gouge his eyes out!



He scratched my left eye!

Objection overruled! He hasn't gouged it out yet!

You are a stickler for rules, aren't you?



Arrachian was a legendary wrestler who won Olympic crowns for Pankration thrice, although by the time he was crowned for the third time, he was dead! At a fierce contest, he was strangled by his opponent and collapsed on the field. However, this did not prevent the judges from crowning his corpse!



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Perhaps the most prestigious event in the Olympic Games was the chariot race. The contestants were often ready to do anything to win it. They would not even stop short of bribing rival charioteers, or deliberately scraping past or colliding with rivals on the tracks! Prizes were awarded to the rich owners of the chariots and not the drivers who sweated it out on the tracks!



Alcibiades took the cake in 415 B.C. He entered seven chariots in the Olympic event, a record in itself, and not only won the first prize, but also took the second and the fourth places!

The first prize goes to Alcibiades

the second prize to Alcibiades..

... the third prize to ...



The Olympics were more than just a sporting spectacle! They were like carnivals. More than 70,000 spectators crowded into the stadium to see their favourites in action!



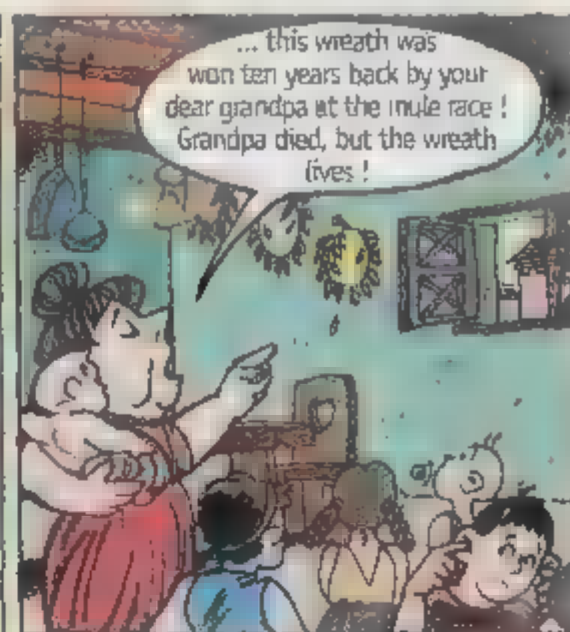




Next, for gouging out an eye, twenty whips...

... for pushing the rider from his chariot ten flogs!

Unlike the modern Olympics where medals are awarded to winners, at the ancient Games the winners received no more than a wreath of olive leaves and a palm frond, which were highly esteemed.



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By A.D. 67, even non-Greeks joined in the Olympic Games. Winners were no longer content with an olive wreath.



Pooh! What is this? A ring of leaves for my pains? Give me gold!

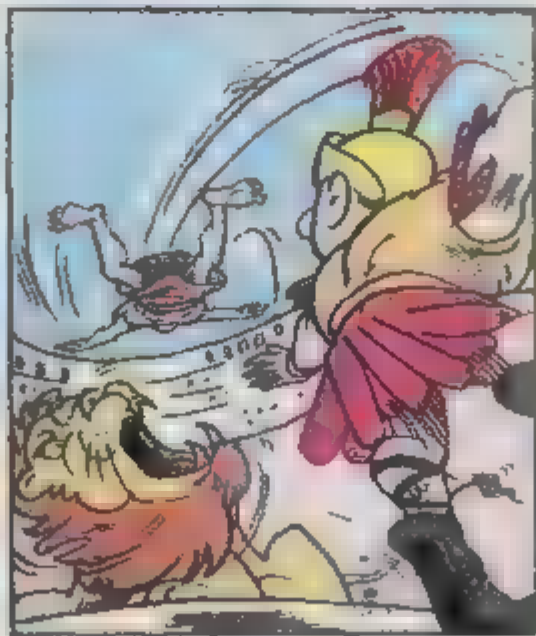


Hey! These leaves are faded. You couldn't even pluck fresh ones!

When the Romans conquered Greece, they took to the Olympic Games with enthusiasm. They gate-crashed into the Olympics, and introduced fantastic spectacles like gladiatorial contests.



Move over, you wimps! You and your long jumps! Now see a real ROMAN in action!



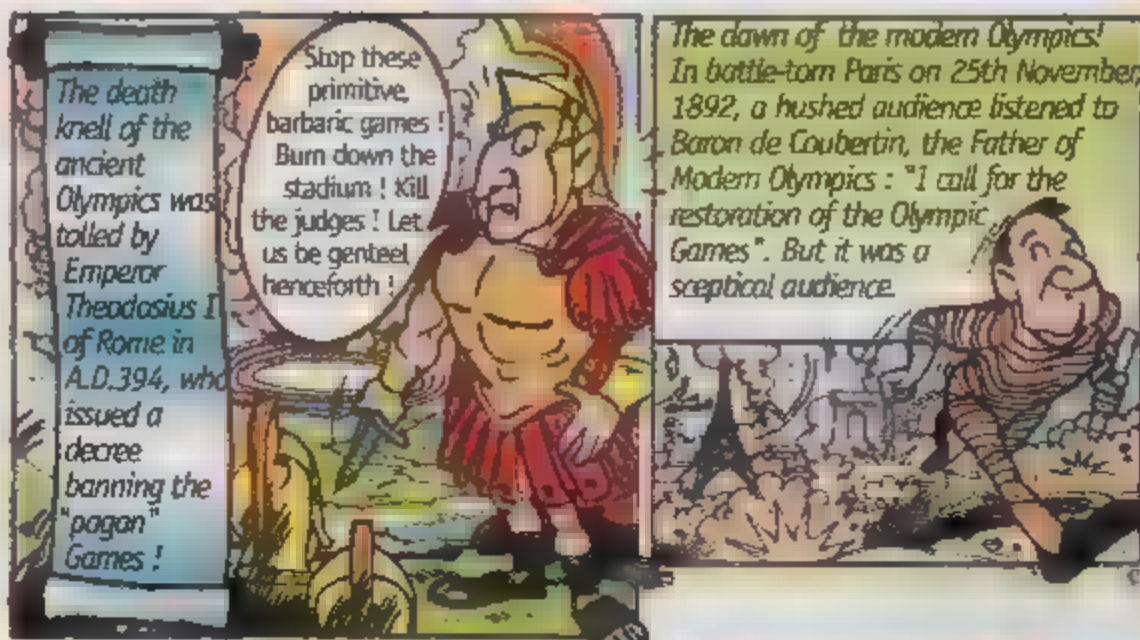
You can say the Olympics became modern in A.D. 67. For the first time, the judges of some of the contests were bribed!

The first contestant to bribe a judge - Emperor Nero of Rome, he who fiddled while Rome burnt! He participated in the chariot race mounted on a ten-horse drawn chariot, was thrown off and did not complete the course- and yet was declared the winner!



... and the winner of this contest is Emperor Nero!



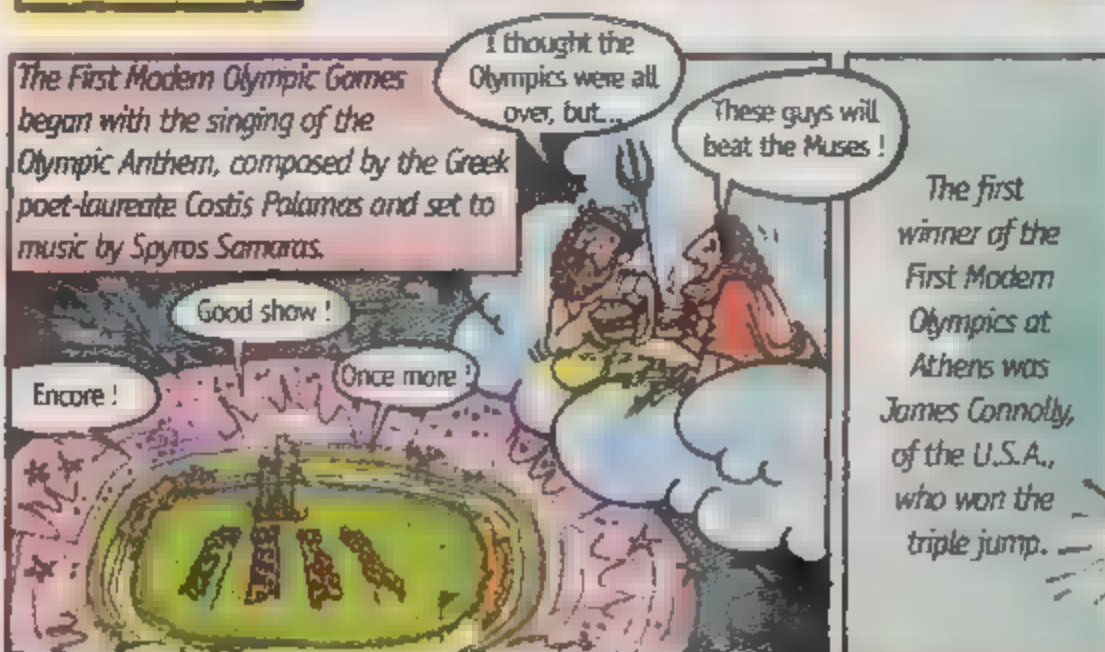


The Baron wanted to hold the First Modern Olympic Games at Olympia in Greece, the original seat of the Olympian Games. But Olympia lacked modern facilities and was not easily accessible.

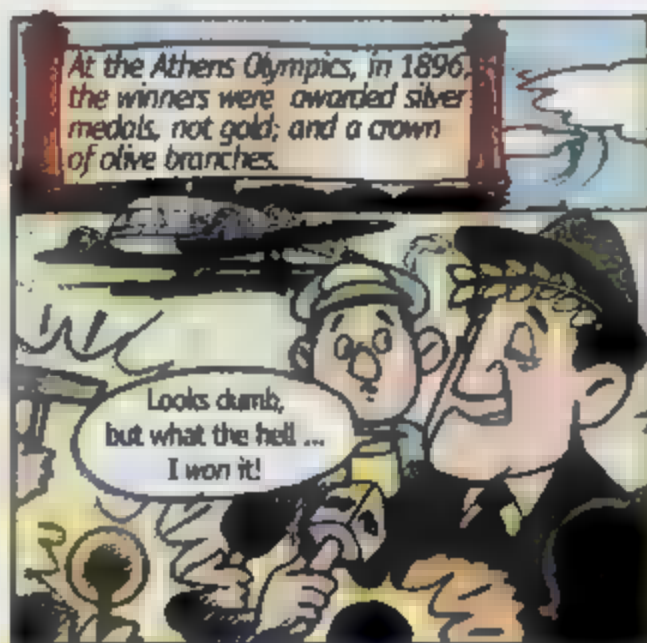


Athens was picked as the venue for the First Modern Olympics in 1896.

The First Games would not have been possible had it not been for the generosity of a rich Greek tycoon, Giorgos Averoff, who donated 920,000 gold drachmas for the renovation of the Olympic stadium.



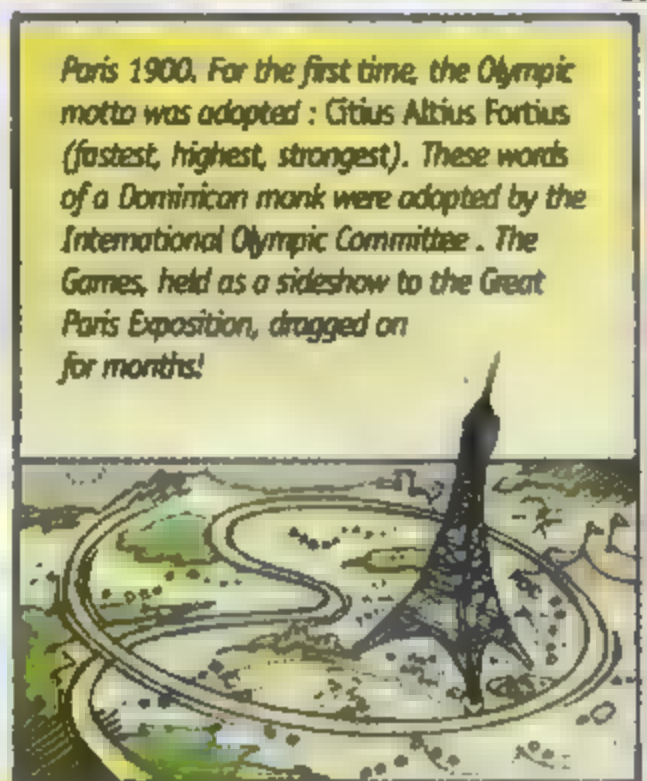




The crowning glory of the Games was the marathon, the quintessential Greek race. This was won, befittingly, by a Greek, Spyridon Louis. As he entered the stadium, two Greek princes, George and Nicholas, ran beside him to the finish line. A Greek barber promised to shave him free for life and a Greek restaurant-owner promised him free meals for life!



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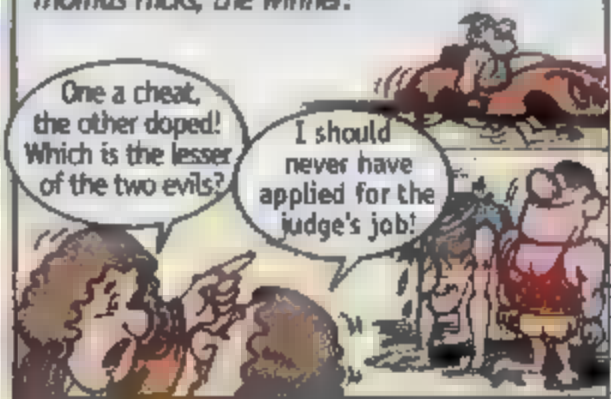
One of the sidelights of the Paris Olympics was the football match between France and Germany, bitter enemies. This was a fiasco: it is believed that the home team won - naturally - by a margin of 25 goals to 16.



For the first time in the history of the Games, women were allowed to participate. Charlotte Cooper of Britain won the lawn tennis singles medal to become the first woman Olympic champion.

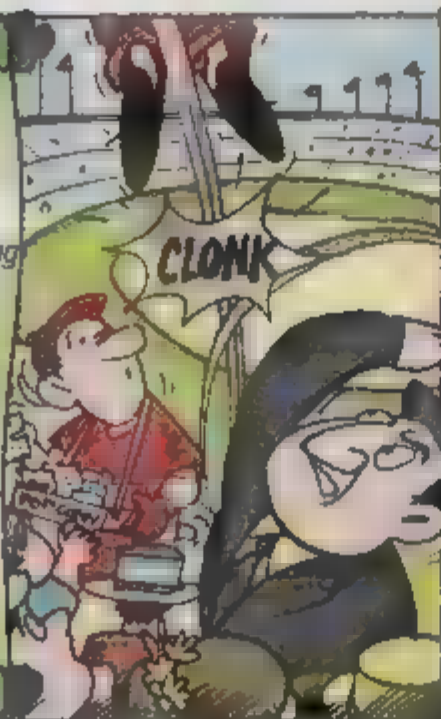


At the III Olympics at St. Louis, USA, in 1904, there was a major scandal when American marathon runner Fred Lorz hitched a ride in a truck and arrived in the stadium first. The judges accused him of cheating, but were shocked to find the runner-up doped. They had no choice but to declare the runner-up, Thomas Hicks, the winner!

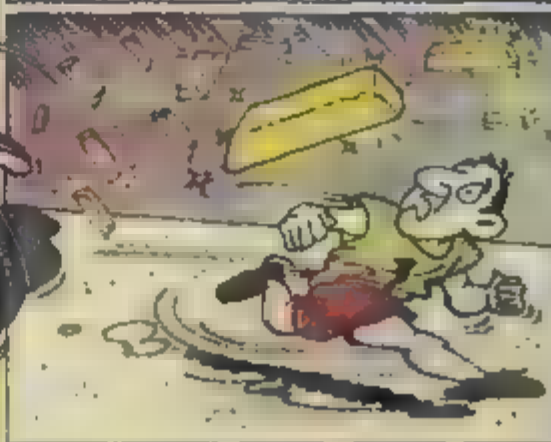




The Olympic wagon moved to London in 1908. "The important thing is not winning .... but taking part". These immortal words were uttered by the Bishop of Pennsylvania at a special sermon in London commemorating the Olympics.



At the London Olympics, the tradition of awarding the winner with a gold medal began.



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An ugly showdown between the UK and US teams marred these Games. In the 400 metre finals, the US runner Carpenter was disqualified for obstruction. A re-run was ordered but the Americans refused to comply. And the gold medal went to UK's Halswelle racing...

... against no opponents!



The V Olympic Games at Stockholm in 1912, was technologically up-to-date, for the first time. Electronic timing devices and photofinish equipment aided the judges for the first time. Jim Thorpe, an American athlete, caught the imagination of the public by sterling performances in the pentathlon and decathlon events.

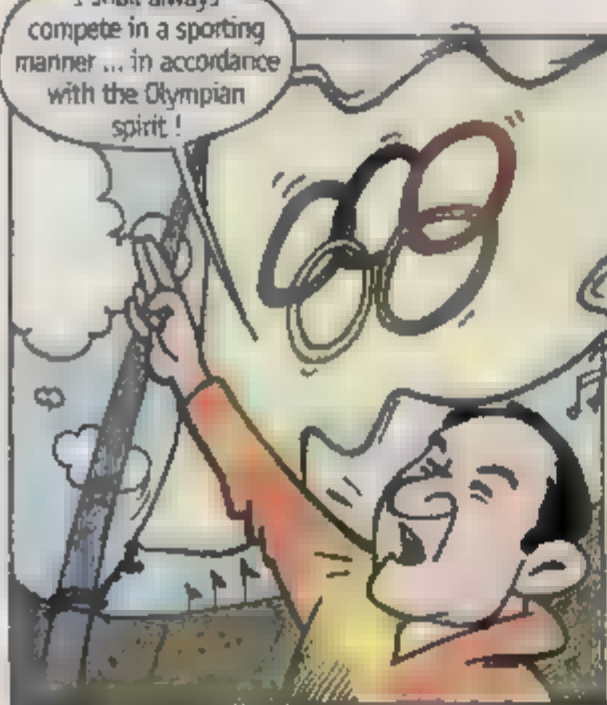


The VI Games in 1916 were awarded to Berlin, Germany, but were abandoned as the First World War broke out in 1914.

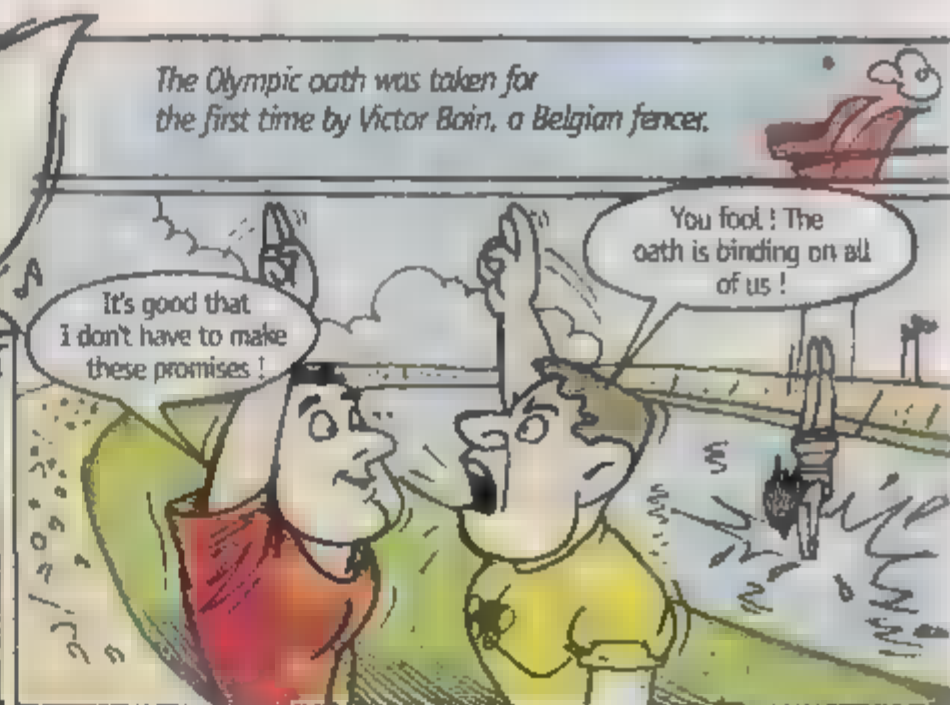


The Games resumed soon after the War. It was at the Antwerp Olympics in 1920 that the five-ringed Olympic Flag was hoisted first. The Flag was inspired by the five-ringed symbol on the altar at Delphi. The five interlocked rings in five colours represent the five regions of the world.

I shall always compete in a sporting manner ... in accordance with the Olympian spirit!



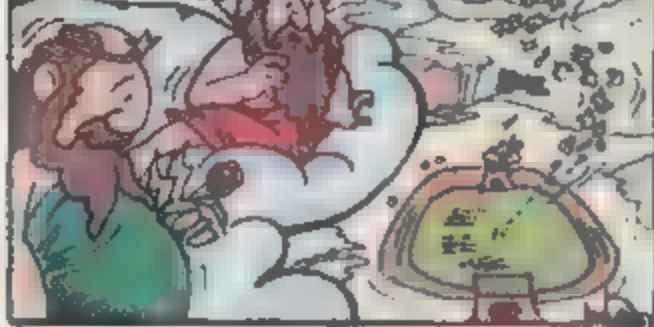
The Olympic oath was taken for the first time by Victor Bain, a Belgian fencer.





The releasing of doves was also officially introduced as an Olympic convention at Antwerp in 1920.

What are those crazy chaps up to now? Are they having a dove race or something?



The Olympics came back to Paris in 1924. It was the last lap of de Coubertin's tenure as President of the IOC. The VIII Games were dominated by Paavo Nurmi all the way. This Finn hauled many Olympic titles through 1920, 1924 and 1928 in athletics. At Paris he swept the 1500, 5,000 & 10,000m. He always carried a stopwatch in his hand ...

... during his races to see whether he was ahead of the records!

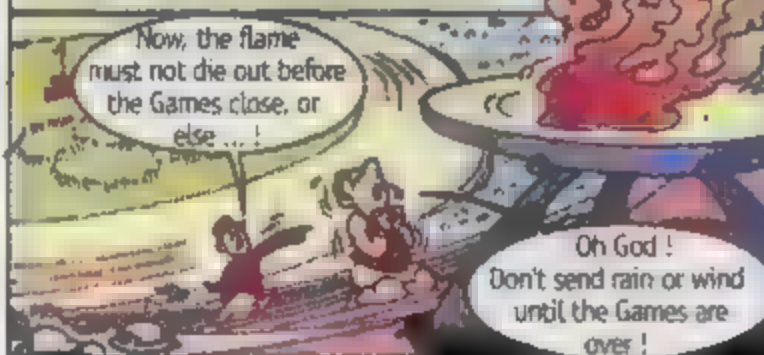
No man can beat me. Now it's me versus time!



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At Amsterdam in 1928 (IX Games), India won its first Olympic hockey gold by beating hosts Netherlands 3-0 in the hockey finals. A scoreboard was installed for the first time and an Olympic Flame burned throughout the Games.

Now, the flame must not die out before the Games close, or else ...!



In 1932, the Games went back to the USA, this time to Los Angeles. For the first time an Olympic Village was created to house and entertain the athletes and officials assembled from all over the world.

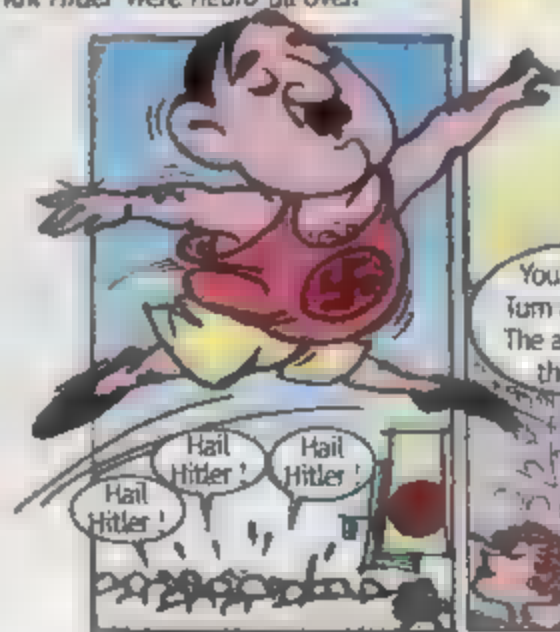
Some village this! And I thought it would be like the villages back home!



The victory podium was introduced for the first time at Los Angeles too! And so was the award-giving ceremony, replete with the playing of national anthems and unfurling of the national flags.



The XI Olympics held in Berlin was marred by the domination of Nazism. The Nazi flags flew everywhere and cries of 'Hail Hitler' were heard all over.



For the first time, the Olympics were televised and broadcast on television. But it was Hitler who was the focus of the cameras!

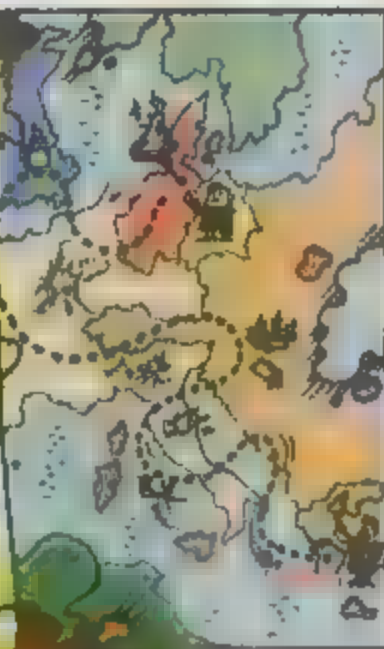
You fool! Turn around. The action is there!

Yes, but I must first save my skin!





The most important convention introduced at Berlin was the lighting of the Olympic torch at Olympia in Greece and taking it by relay to the site of the Games to light the Olympic flame. It took 3,075 runners to carry it across Europe to Berlin.



The Berlin Olympics was dominated by the performance of a coloured American : Jesse Owens. He won 4 golds in 100m, 200m, long jump and sprint relay. This irritated Hitler who advocated Aryan supremacy.



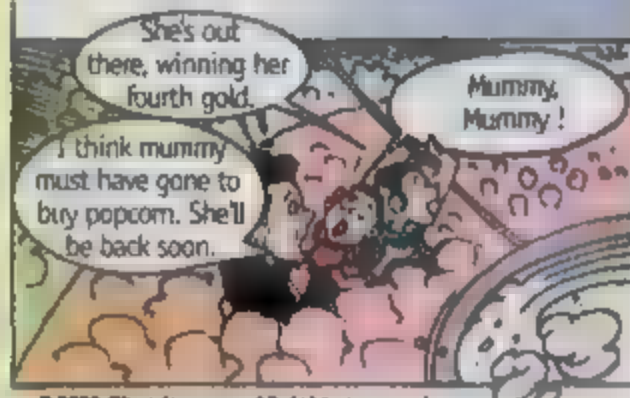
Aryan ?  
Wonder what it means ?



The Second World War (1939-1945) saw two Olympic Games being abandoned - the Tokyo Olympics scheduled for 1940 and the London Olympics scheduled for 1944.



The XIV Olympic Games held at London in 1948, after World War II. Fanny Blankers-Koen of the Netherlands, a 30-year-old housewife and mother of two, dominated the Games like no other woman had ever done before. She won the 100m, 200m, 80m hurdles, and the 4x100m relay.



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At the XV Olympics Games in 1952 at Helsinki, long distance runner Emil Zatopek, the Czech Express, was the man to watch out for ! His unusual grimaces and facial expressions set him apart as a most unconventional athlete. He won the 5,000m, 10,000m and the marathon, becoming the first athlete to win the distance treble !



For the first time, the Olympic Games left the European & American shores. The XVI Games was held in Melbourne, Australia, in 1956. The striking feature of this Games was that the equestrian events were held outside the host country, at Stockholm in Sweden. This was because the Australians had peculiar quarantine laws that would not let in horses !



Two coloured men left a strong impression at the XVII Olympics in Rome in 1960. The first was Abebe Bikila, the bare-foot runner from Ethiopia, who won the marathon and set a world best time of 2 hrs 15 min 16.2 seconds. It is said that the African athletes train by running alongside the fast zebras.





And the other coloured : Cassius Clay of America, later to become the legendary Mohammed Ali, won the middle heavy weight boxing gold. He was just 18 then !



Gosh, what modesty !

In 1964, the Olympics came to Tokyo. Japan was the first far-eastern country to have the honour of hosting the Games. The Games were marked by hospitality and enthusiasm. Even heavy rains could not dampen the spirits of the Japanese, who came to the stadia ...

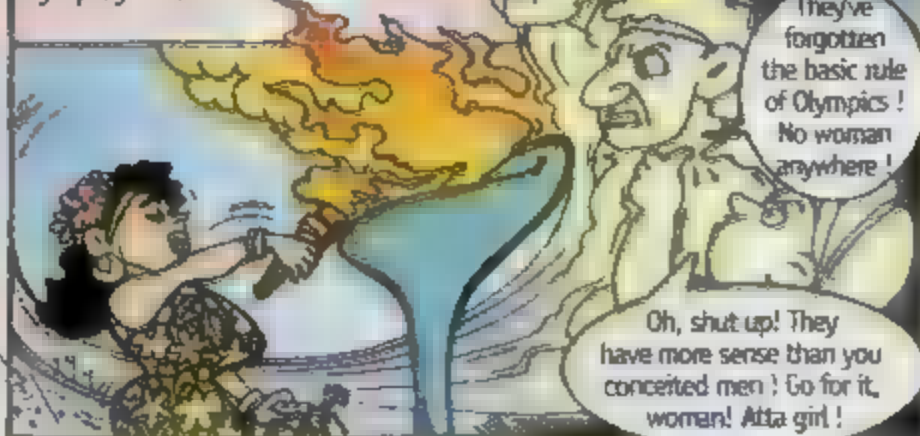


... in large numbers and huddled under umbrellas.



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At Mexico, in 1968, for the first time a woman, Enriqueta Basilio, was given the honour of lighting the Olympic flame.

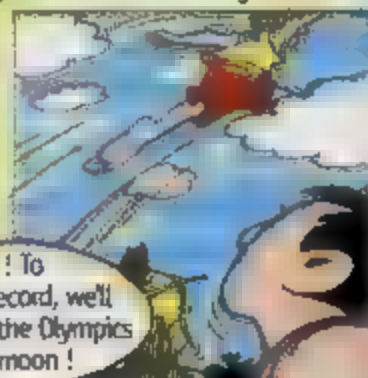


Women ! Women ! They're everywhere !

They've forgotten the basic rule of Olympics ! No woman anywhere !

Oh, shut up ! They have more sense than you concerted men ! Go for it, woman ! Atta girl !

The Mexico Olympics was held at an altitude of 7,500 feet above the sea level which made setting jumping records very easy. Bob Beamon of the USA won the long jump with a leap of 8.9 metres, a record that remained intact for long ! He was assisted by 27 % less atmospheric pressure and 23% less air density.



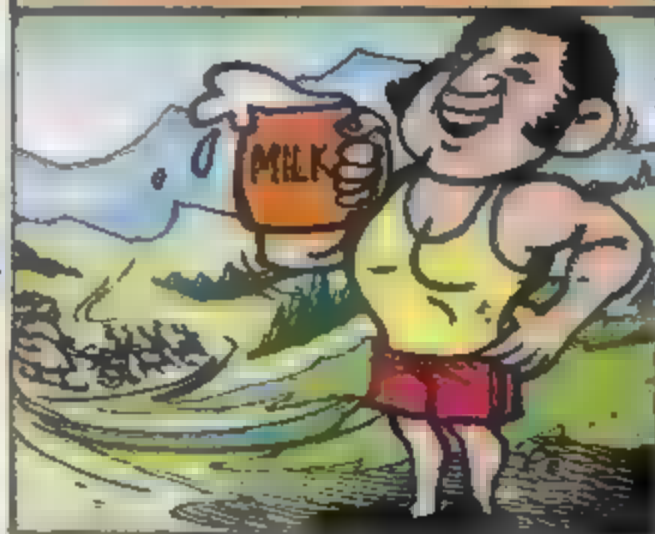
The introduction of a new technique in high jump was an important feature of these Games. This was called the Fosbury Flop after Dick Fosbury of the U.S.A. He introduced the technique of going over the bar backwards, stretching the back and flipping the legs upwards.



The Munich Olympics in 1972 saw a blasphemy of the Olympic spirit. Masked Palestinian terrorists murdered 11 members of the Israeli team on 5th September.



Lasse Viren of Finland won the 5,000m and the 10,000m, following the feats of Hannes Kolehmainen (1912) Emil Zatopek (1952), and, Vladimir Kutz (1956) in winning 10,000 and 5,000m in the same Games. During his training for the Olympics, he was on a diet of reindeer milk.

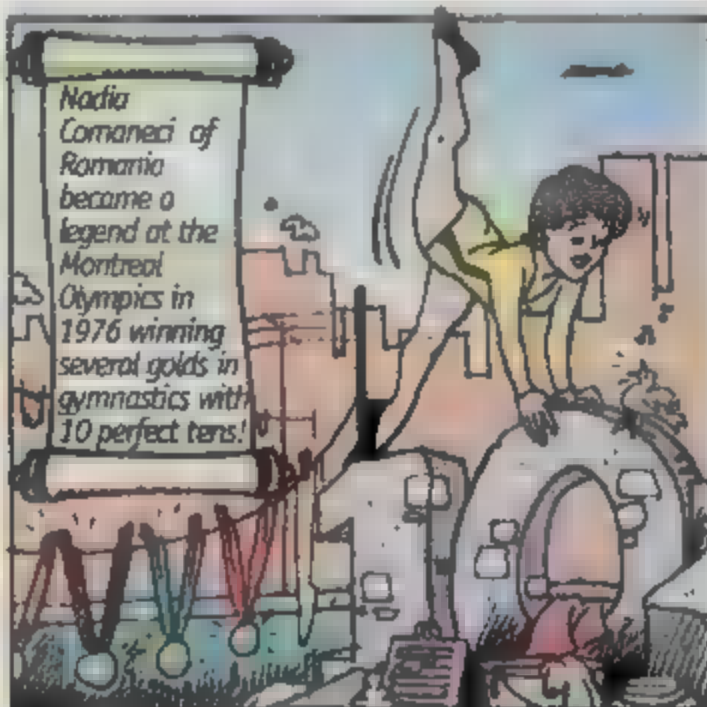




Another African made a remarkable dent in the field of athletics: John Akii-bua from Uganda who won a gold in the 400m hurdles, setting a record.



Nadia Comaneci of Romania became a legend at the Montreal Olympics in 1976 winning several golds in gymnastics with 10 perfect tens!



Politics has been dogging the Games all along. At Moscow in 1980, many countries like the USA, Pakistan, Germany, Australia and Holland kept away. The highlight of the Games was the legendary rivalry between Steve Ovett and Sebastian Coe, both middle-distance runners of Britain. Ovett won the 800 metres while Coe took the 1,500 metres.



Los Angeles, 1984. There was a revenge boycott of the Games by the countries behind the Iron Curtain. The Games belonged to Carl Lewis of the USA, who equalled the record of Jesse Owens set in 1936. He won four Olympic golds in athletics: 100m, 200m, the long jump and the 4x100m relay.



The Seoul Olympics in 1988 reached its nadir when gold medallist Ben Jonson, the Canadian record-holder in the 100m, was stripped of his gold medal as he failed a drug test. Strict measures were taken to identify users of performance-boosting drugs. About 100 kinds of drugs were banned before the Games and the latest drug-testing systems were introduced.

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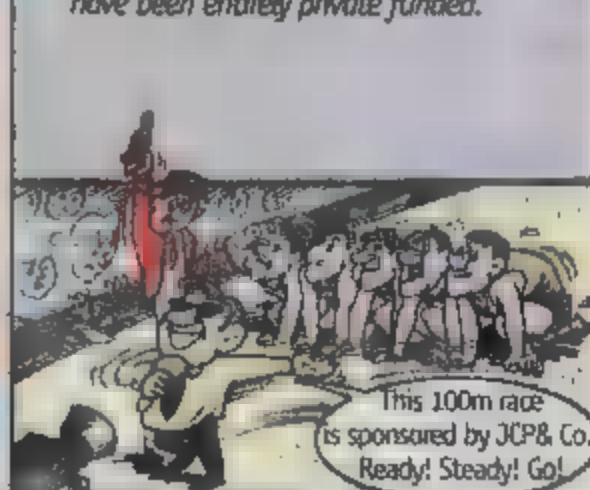


The shock element was provided by Ukrainian Sergei Bubka, ace pole vaulter and world record holder, who could not clear the pole vault bar even once at Barcelona!



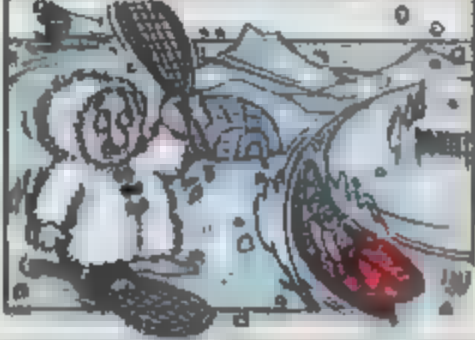
The Barcelona Games in 1992 witnessed the resurfacing of the true Olympic spirit. All countries participated and smaller countries like Estonia and Latvia were seen in action!

The Olympics returned to the U.S.A for the last Games of the millennium. The Atlanta Games in 1996 were unique: they were the first Olympic Games to have been entirely private funded.

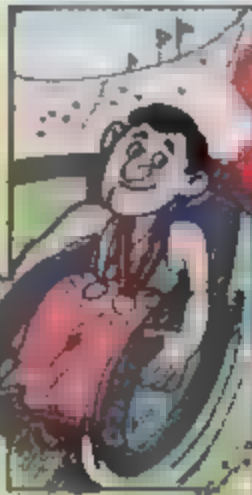




When the Olympic Games picked up momentum, the need was felt for a Winter Olympics to foster excellence in winter games like skiing, skating, tobogganing, bobsleigh and others. The Winter Olympics have been held since 1924. They are held every four years, in between the Summer Games.



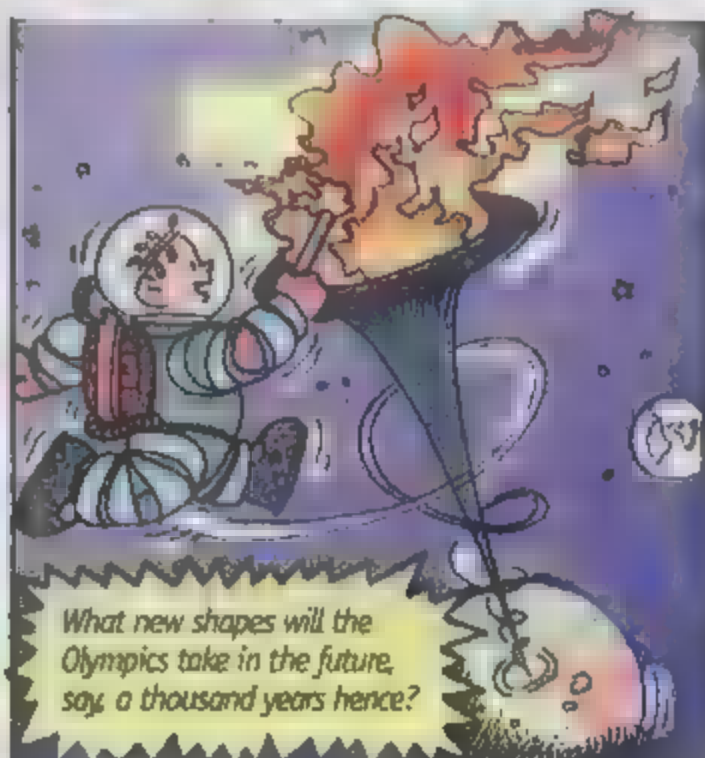
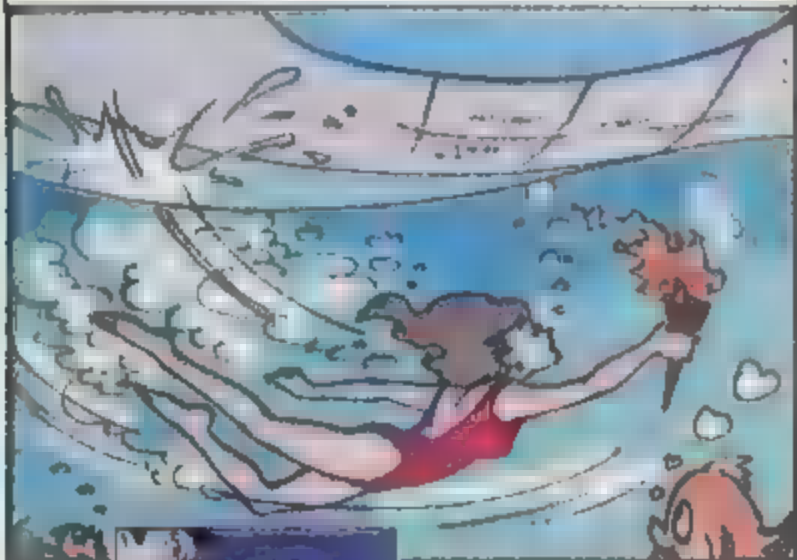
Another version of the Olympic Games is the Paralympics or the special olympics for the physically and mentally disabled.



Come September 2000 and the world's eyes will focus on Sydney, the venue of the first Olympic Games of the new millennium.



As a build-up to the Olympics, the Olympic torch was briefly relayed under water for the first time in Olympic history. This was done to showcase Australia's greatest natural wealth: the Great Barrier Reef.

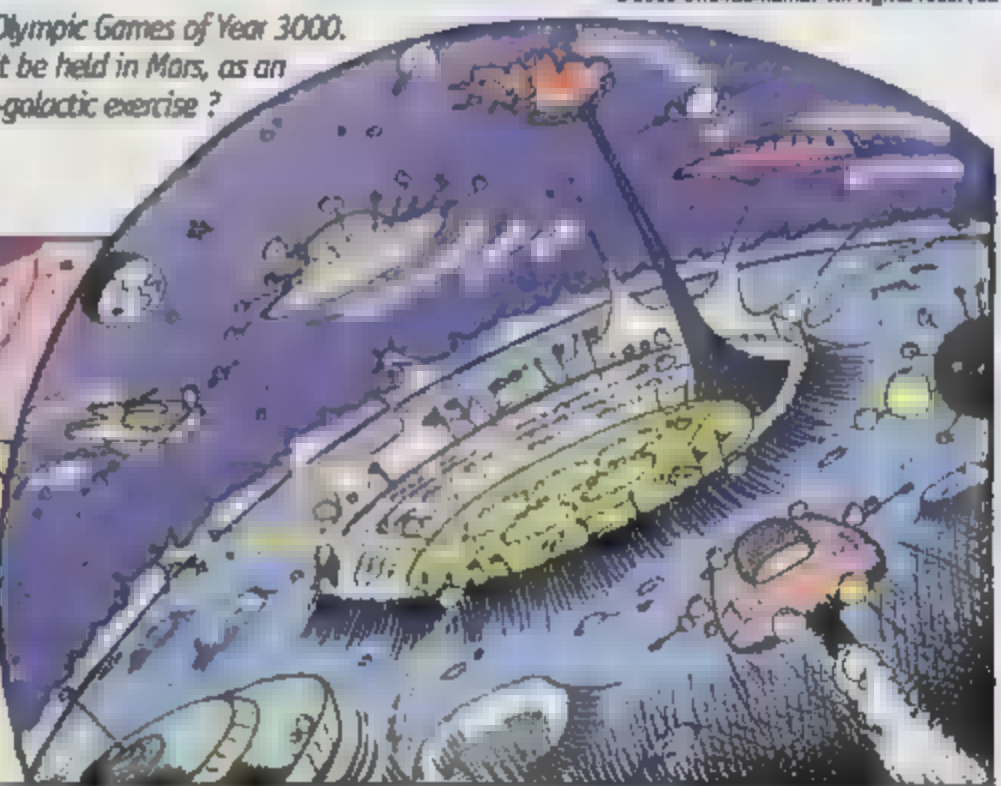


What new shapes will the Olympics take in the future, say, a thousand years hence?

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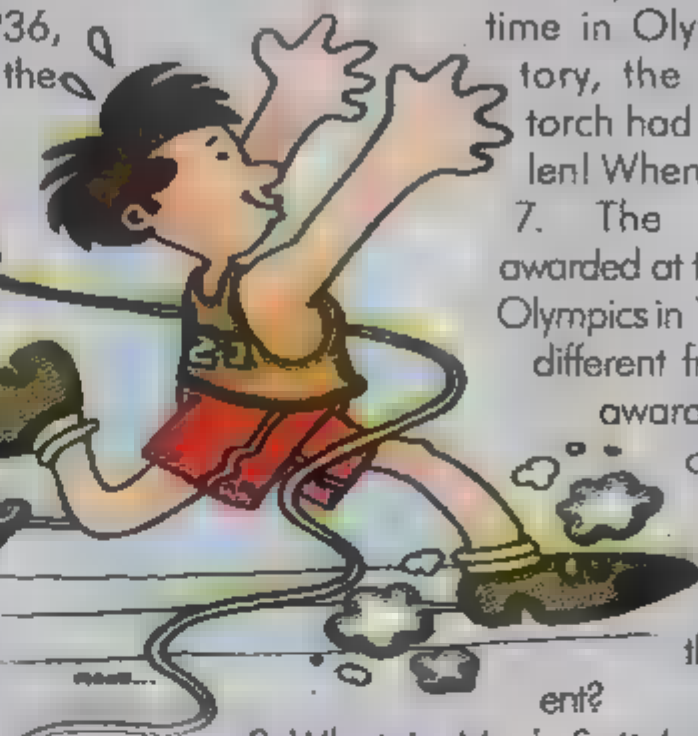
The Olympic Games of Year 3000. Will it be held in Mars, as an inter-galactic exercise?





1. Who was the first man to swim 100m under a minute?
2. He froze a bit of time and preserved it on film for posterity. This was in 1936, at the Berlin Olympics, which is the first Olympics to have been video-graphed and tele-vised. Who is he?
3. Which Australian athlete earned the title "Human Deer" for winning the 1500m in record time?
4. Who was the old timer who at 65 years competed and helped his country win a gold? When was this?
5. When did the Indian hockey team first win and when did they first lose the Olympic gold medal?
6. The Olympic torch had been lit and handed by the first runner to the second in the relay. As the third runner

## OLYMPIC QUIZ



waited his turn with the torch, much to his chagrin, the relay runner who handed him the torch did not turn up. For the first

time in Olympic history, the Olympic torch had been stolen! When was this?

7. The medals awarded at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996 were different from those awarded at the other Olympic Games. How were they different?

8. What is Mark Spitz's claim to Olympic fame?
9. He was the first high jumper to break the 28- feet barrier and he did it in style. He jumped 29 feet 2 1/2 inches on his very first jump in the competition. Who was he?
10. Who is the only Indian to have ever won an Olympic medal in an individual event?

10. Norman Pritchard who won a silver medal in 200m in the Paris Games of 1900.
9. Bob Beamon at Mexico City in 1968.
8. records in the process.
7. 1972, and broke seven Olympic swimming events at Munich Olympics, which they were being awarded on one side. On the other side, they depicted the five-ringed Olympic motif.
6. Mark Spitz won seven golds in the 1972, and broke seven Olympic records in the process.
5. Bob Beamon at Mexico City in 1968.
4. Norman Pritchard who won a silver medal in 200m in the Paris Games of 1900.

1. Johnny Weissmuller of the USA, who later shot into fame as Tarzan.
2. Leni Riefenstahl.
3. Herb Elliott of Australia won the 1500m in a record time of 3 min 35.6 sec in Rome in 1960.
4. Swedish shooter Oscar Swahn was nearly 65 years old when he won the individual running deer competition and helped his country win the team Shooting Championship in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics.
5. The Indian hockey team won the first Olympic gold medal at the Amsterdam Games in 1928. They lost the gold medal

Answers



# EVENTS QUIZ



These are popular Olympic events.  
Can you identify them?

Answers : see next page

## Mascot Match

How good are you at identifying flags of various countries? Good? Then, why don't you try identifying these flags? You also have to identify the Olympic mascots given below. Do you know at which Olympic Games these mascots were to be found? Match the mascots with the flags of the countries where the Games took place.

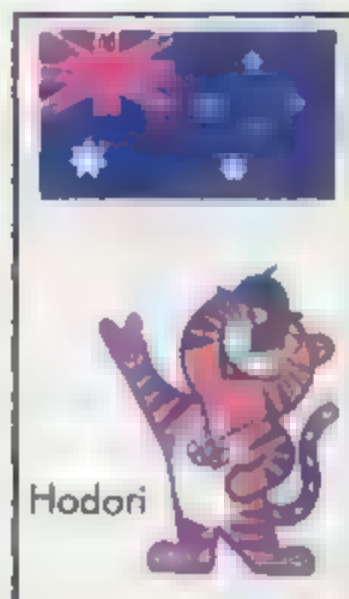
Answers : see next page



Chandamama



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September 2000



# Tracing tracks

Amit has the great job of lighting the Olympic flame. But he has to weave his way through the maze of events happening on the sportsfield. Can you help him up to the flame?



## Answers

### Events Quiz

1. Relay race - note the baton in the athlete's hand.
2. Sprint
3. Gymnastics - floor exercises
4. High jump

### Mascot Match

1. Waldi, the dog- mascot of the 1976 Olympics held at Montreal, Canada
2. Cobi, the cat - mascot of the 1992 Olympics held at Barcelona, Spain
3. Hodori, the tiger - mascot of the 1988 Olympics held at Seoul, South Korea
4. Olly, the kookaburra, Millie, the echidna and Syd, the platypus - mascots of the 2000 Olympics to be held at Sydney



# Ranga the story- teller

Ranga loved telling stories. This was so when he was a little boy, and it remained so when he grew up. He took pains in making up long stories. Like a python, they curved and twisted about till one could not follow any of the bends and turns or see the beginning or the end.

"Father, can I tell you a story?" little Ranga would ask.

"I'm very busy, just now," or "I'm really tired. It has been a hard day, you know," his father would say.

"Oh Ranga! Your stories are so long and I've to cook dinner," his mother would excuse herself. "I've to clean the house." Or "wash the dishes."

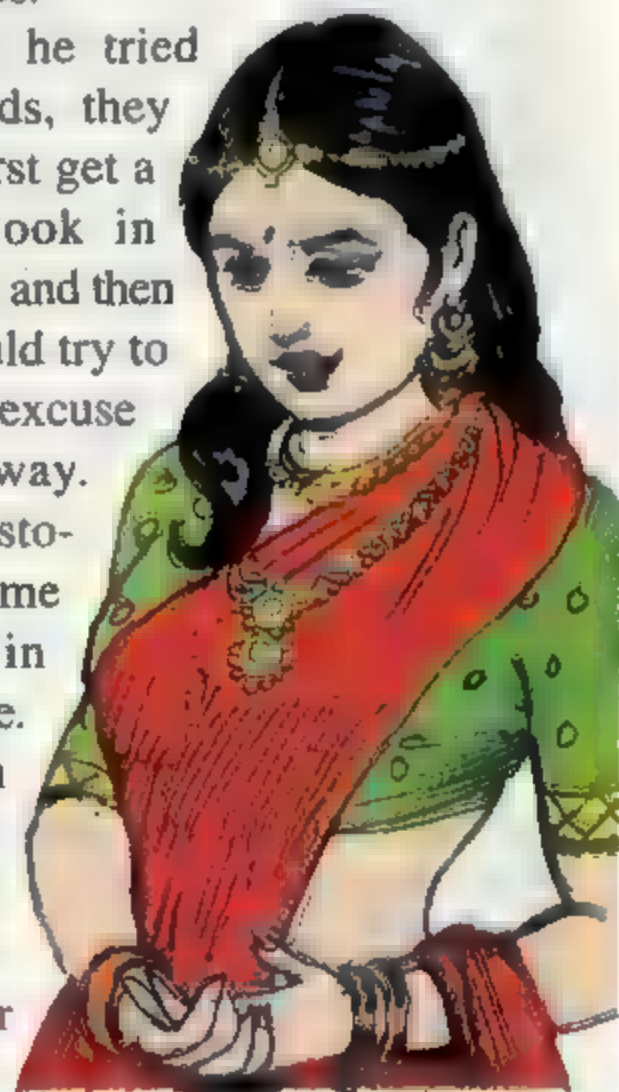
His aunt was a young girl. She was engaged to be married. Ranga thought she would surely have time for his stories. But she was very rude. "Oh, do

go away!" she said. "It's much more interesting to dream of my future. I don't have time for your long, pointless stories."

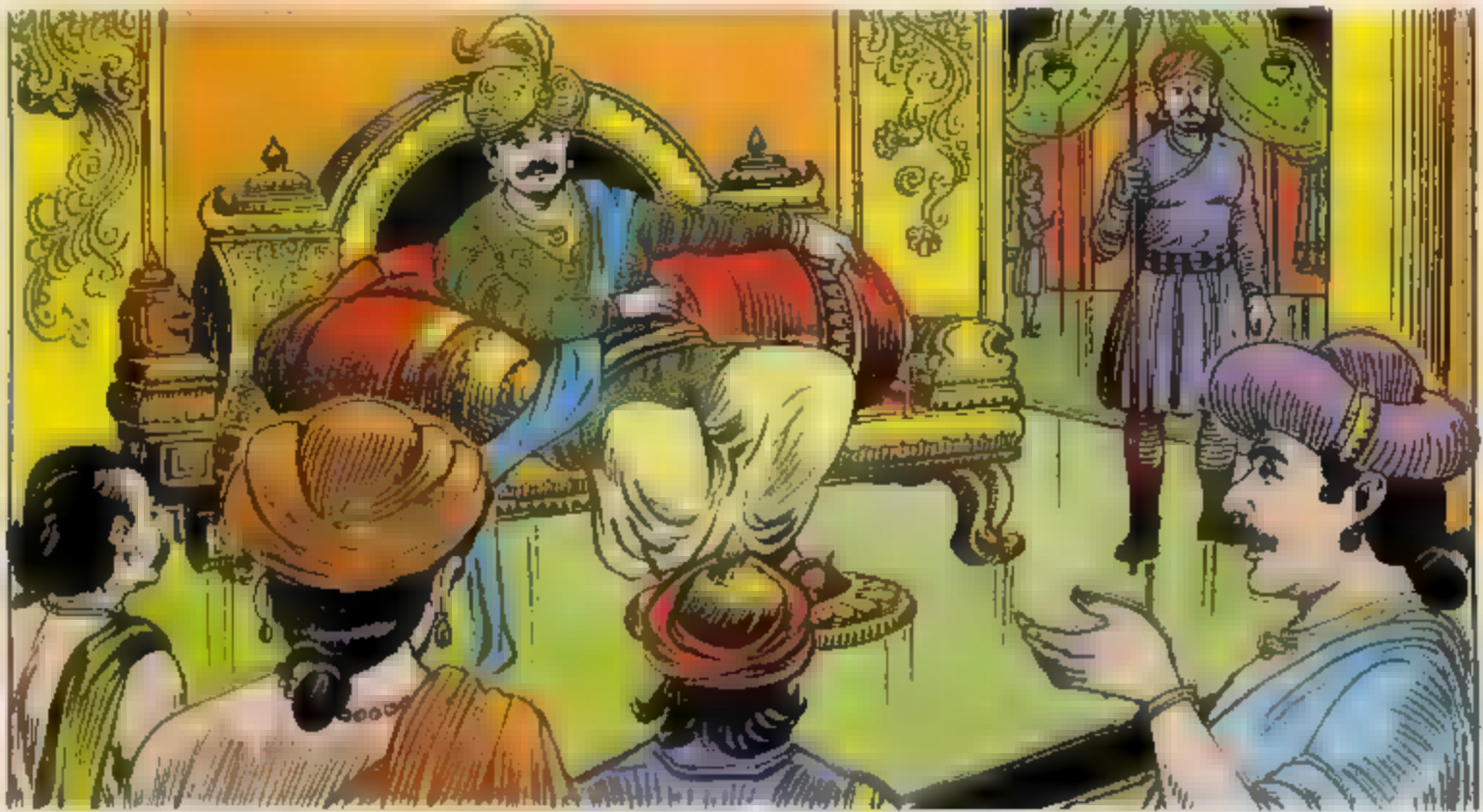
When he tried his friends, they would first get a glazed look in their eyes and then they would try to make an excuse to go away.

Ranga's stories became famous in the village.

When something was very difficult or needed a







lot of patience, they would say, "This is like listening to Ranga's stories."

All this made Ranga very sad. But it did not stop him from making up stories or telling them. He was certain that he would find his listeners some time.

Ranga remembered his grandmother had once told him that ghosts loved to listen to stories. So he went to the cremation ground at the end of the village. He felt no fear while in the graveyard. He was so keen to tell his stories to someone who would listen to them to the end. On the first day, all the ghosts gathered around Ranga. Maybe it is true that they like human stories as much as we like ghost stories! But after some days, the ghosts, too, lost patience and their number dwindled down to two or three and then none at all.

Around that time there was a conspiracy in the kingdom to assassinate the king. The secret police managed to capture one of the conspirators. He turned out to be very tough. The police questioned him and beat him, but he would not reveal the details of the plot or the names of the conspirators. Finally, someone from Ranga's village at the court suggested: "Let's ask Ranga to tell him a story. He'll break for sure."

The police chief was most surprised. But since there was nothing else they could think of, Ranga was asked to come and tell the prisoner one of his stories. After about an hour, the prisoner clamped his ears and pleaded with the jailer, "Enough! Enough! I'll reveal everything, if you take this man away. If I've to listen to any more of his story, I'll go mad!"

The king was pleased and wanted to reward Ranga for his success. "What success?" said Ranga most indignantly. "I'll call myself successful only if people listened to my stories. If you're really grateful, find me at least one listener who will listen to one story to the end."

So the king asked his ministers to discuss a strategy to find an audience for Ranga.

The ministers later said: "We think this is a matter for the royal astrologer."

The royal astrologer looked at his almanac, counted the stars in his charts, mumbled some calculations, and said: "This is not something that is humanly possible. We need divine intervention. Let Ranga sit with a pile of copper plates in front of a special altar. He should have a purifying bath in the river and sit at the altar every day and write out his stories on the copper plates. While he is writing them, he should also say them aloud so that God can hear him."

So an altar was made and Ranga started telling his stories loudly as he wrote them down.

After about a week, God appeared before him. He looked a little harassed but smiled sweetly and asked Ranga what he wished for. Ranga said reverently, "My lord, please grant me an audience for my stories. That is the only thing I want."

"Yes, you'll get your audience. But it will only happen at the destined time."

"But please tell me when I'll get my audience. How long will I have to wait?" asked Ranga pitifully.



God took pity on him and said: "Well, many years from now, your country will grow big and there will be many people in it. Every home will crave for some form of entertainment. By my grace, you'll enter each home at the same time. Though the people may not see you, they will listen to your stories for several days, sometimes for weeks together."

Have you guessed how Ranga really got his audience?



# Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation – its glorious quest for Truth through the ages

## 9. The Boy who changed his own Destiny

“Grandpa, we take our festivals and ceremonies for granted, don’t we? How little do we realise the significance behind them!” said Chameli.

“Indeed, there is much significance behind them. But we must also be cautious of the popular stories which circulate about them,” said Grandpa.

“How do such stories grow, Grandpa?” asked Sandip.

“The reasons are many. But the chief one among them is ignorance. When one fails to understand a phenomenon, one invents an explanation for it. You’ve seen the calendar that hangs on the wall of the dining room – with a picture showing some horrible figures throwing a noose around the symbol of Siva and Lord Siva’s trident scaring them away?”

“Grandpa, this is almost telepathy! Several times had I thought of asking

you about that picture which also shows ■ charming little boy standing behind Siva with his hands folded. What does all that mean?”

“There must be ■ story behind the scene depicted in the picture, Grandpa! Won’t you narrate that for our benefit?” demanded Chameli.

“Chameli, I’ve to tell that story if I’ve to explain the picture as you see it,” said Prof. Devnath and he went over the legend:

There lived ■ sage named

Mrikanda in a remote past. Being childless, he meditated on Lord Siva for ■ long time, praying to be blessed with a child. As destiny had so ordained that he was to go without ■ child, his prayer could be granted only with some conditions. Siva appeared before him in his vision and asked him whether he would like to have ■ fool for ■ son who would live for ■ hundred years, or he would prefer ■ son who would be extremely wise and gentle but would die on completing twelve years of age. Being ■ sage who adored wisdom, Mrikanda chose the second



of the two alternatives given to him.

A son was born to him and he was given the name Markandeya.

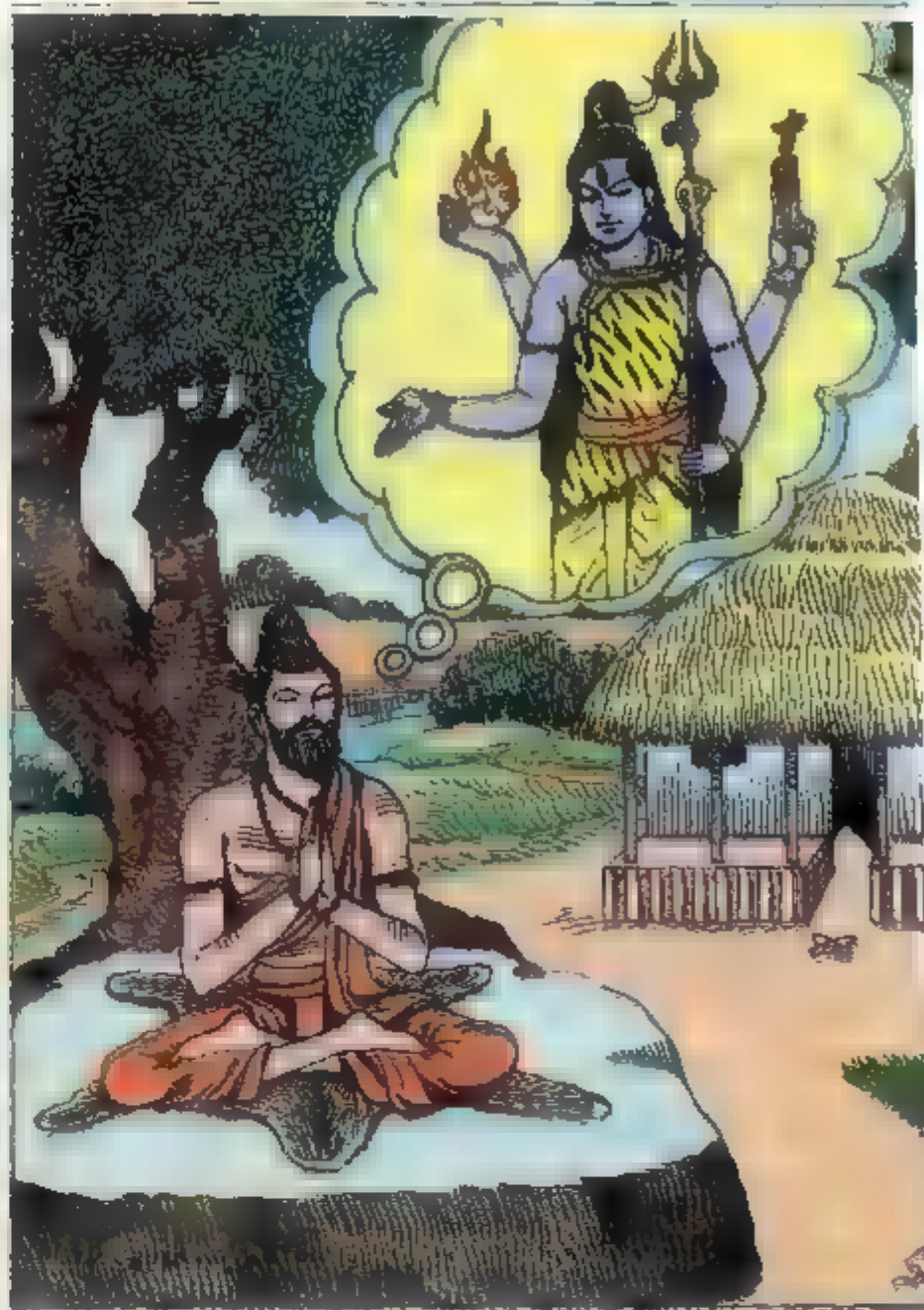
Markandeya began to show the signs of a genius even when he was barely five years of age. Sages from far and wide, curious about the prodigy, came to meet him and went back thoroughly satisfied. Markandeya impressed everybody not only with his wisdom and power of understanding, but with his humility and courtesy.

When he was eight, he could lucidly explain the Vedas to the sages. No wonder his parents felt greatly proud of him and they were immensely happy.

But as Markandeya completed ten years of age, a cloud of gloom appeared on the faces of his parents. They knew that this divine wonder of a boy would be no longer in the world after another two years.

Soon their sorrow began to find its expression through tears. At first they wept hiding the tears from their

Chandamama



son. But as days passed, and when only a few months were left for Markandeya to complete his twelfth year, they could not check themselves from openly blaming and cursing their fate.

“What’s the matter with you, father? Why should a sage like you and why should my wise mother, who is known for her calm, cry at all? What ails you? Be pleased to tell me. I’ll do my best to remove the cause of your sorrow,” said Markandeya.

“My son, you cannot remove the cause of our sorrow. My heart breaks to tell you that *you* are the cause of



our sorrow," answered Sage Markandeya.

Taken aback, Markandeya asked: "Am I that bad to cause suffering to my noble parents?"

"The case is exactly the opposite, my son. You've been so good a son that we cannot think of living without you," said the sage, and he then told the boy the background of his birth.

Markandeya kept quiet for long. Then, in a voice throbbing with love for his parents as well as a voice that was marked by determination, he said: "Don't you worry. Leave the issue to



me. Let me handle my own destiny."

Markandeya chose a solitary spot and sat down there and was soon lost in deep meditation. He had asked his parents and friends not to disturb him. Overlooked by snowclad mountains, he concentrated deeper and deeper on Lord Siva. Siva means eternity - the pure and

the indestructible. Having become one with Him, Markandeya ceased to be a separate self tied to time, birth, and death.

He completed his twelfth year



while in that condition. Supernatural powers who lead the human souls away from their mortal coils when the moment of death arrives came to do their duty, but they failed to find Markandeya. This was because there was no individual Markandeya. He had become one with the eternal. The supernatural beings went back.

Once the destined moment of death had passed, Markandeya was ■ new person with ■ new life. By and by he emerged from his deep trance and looked up. It so happened that the seven great Rishis were passing by. Markandeya bowed to each one of them and each one wished him a long life, while blessing him. Hence Markandeya was endowed with a

very long life.

Sandip and Chameli, who listened to the legend with great attention, were not willing to get up. But it was time for Grandpa to keep some appointment with his friends and so the session had to end.

“Now, my children, do you understand why the picture we were talking about has to be like that? This philosophy of achieving a victory over death and the compassionate Siva, the latter vanquishing the former, becomes something exciting and memorable.”

“We understand,” said the children, beaming with joy that comes out of learning in a spontaneous way.

- Visvavasu

(To continue)







## SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

the newly independent India needed an able spokesman in some of the most important countries. Dr. Radhakrishnan was sent as India's Ambassador to one of the two most powerful countries in the world of the day, the U.S.S.R. or the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (which does not exist any longer). The country was then ruled by Stalin, who was a very difficult person to please. But he warmly appreciated the statesman-like personality and scholarship of Dr. Radhakrishnan. As a result, India and the U.S.S.R. came closer to each other.

India needed a distinguished Vice-President, and Dr. Radhakrishnan filled that position, to be elected as the President of the Republic in 1962. He discharged his duties with dignity till he retired in 1967.

Of his many works in English, the most widely read is *Indian Philosophy*. Listen to him : "To say that god created the world is an understatement. He is creating now and for all the time. History is in this sense the epic of the Divine will, a revelation of god. The Divine works and shines through the earthly medium."

Dr. Radhakrishnan died in 1975. His birthday, the 5th of September, is celebrated all over India as the Teachers' Day.

On the 5th of September 1888 was born Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan who, in due course of time, became one of the foremost exponents of Indian philosophy in the world, who also adorned the position of the President of the Republic of India.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's illustrious career began as the Professor of Philosophy at the Presidency College, Madras. Thereafter he served Calcutta University in the same capacity prior to his appointment as the Professor of Eastern Religions at the University of Oxford (1936-1939). He then served the Benares Hindu University as its Vice-Chancellor till 1948.

By then he had become famous as an intellectual of high calibre and an excellent orator. He was appointed Chairman of the UNESCO in 1949. But



## SAGA OF VISHNU

### 4. The Magic of Maya

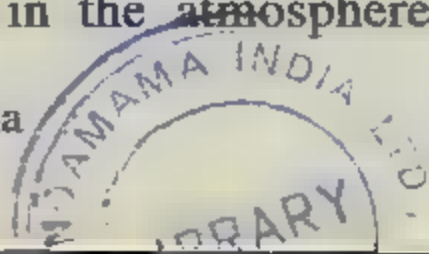
In the forest of Naimisharanya, Sage Suta went on narrating to the other sages the great event known as the Churning of the Ocean. Both gods and demons took part in the exercise, the two communities holding the two ends of the serpent Vasuki which was being used as the rope. Mount Mandar served as the central pole.

As the churning progressed, the gods showed signs of strain. The demons laughed at them. Feeling embarrassed, the gods put in all their strength to churn the ocean better. That resulted in the serpent Vasuki growing extremely weak. He began emitting poison. It was so powerful that, if allowed to spread in the atmosphere, it

would have destroyed the world.

The gods prayed to Lord Siva to intervene. Siva swallowed up the whole quantity of the terrible stuff. Its effect changed the colour of His throat to blue. Hence Siva is known as Nilakantha or the Blue-throated God.

Yet another unforeseen problem came to the surface. The ground beneath Mount Mandar could not bear its continuous movement. As the earth gave way, the Mount began to sink. At this critical juncture, Vishnu incarnated as a tortoise and bore the mount on His back so that the churning could proceed without any difficulty. This incarnation of Vishnu is known as the Kurmavatar.





Priceless items emerged one by one from the depths of the ocean. They were Chandra (the Moon), Goddess Lakshmi, the great horse Uchhaisrava, the Kalpavata (the Wish-fulfilling Tree), Kamadhenu (the Wish-fulfilling cow), and the wonderful



elephant Airavata, among many other objects.

In order to keep himself cool, despite the terrible poison inhaled by Him, Lord Siva chose Chandra to dwell on His head. Thereby He got another name - Chandrashekhara. Goddess Lakshmi garlanded Vishnu,

choosing Him as Her consort. Hence Vishnu came to be known as Lakshmikanta.

At last emerged Dhanvantari, holding a treasure of medicines as well as the most desired item - a jarful of Amrita or nectar.

There had been no dispute between the gods and the demons regarding the division of the treasures the ocean had yielded to them. But both camps were eager to take hold of the nectar, and a fight broke out between them. The demons, after all, were stronger than the gods. They snatched away the jar of nectar from the gods. That was a great crisis. Once the demons drank the stuff, they would become immortal. They would vanquish the gods and any power that stood in their way. The demons valued nothing more than their pleasure and power. They had no concern for peace, justice, and freedom without which no progress can be made. Under their mastery, the earth would ever remain a field of anarchy.

Suddenly, there appeared between the warring parties a damsel of indescribable beauty. Gods and demons looked at her agape with wonder. The jar of nectar was in the hands of the

demons. But when the damsel extended her hands to receive it, they quietly handed it over to her without even questioning who she was and what she proposed to do with the nectar.

At her suggestion, the gods and the demons sat in two rows. They got the impression that she would distribute the nectar among all of them. The damsel began to dole out the stuff first to the gods. The demons thought that their turn would come soon. But the quantity was getting less and less. One demon, who happened to be the son of the sea-demoness Simhika, stealthily sat down amidst the gods and got a share of the nectar. But the Sun and the Moon who, meanwhile had realized that the damsel was none other than Vishnu, whispered to Him about the clever young demon. Instantly, Vishnu's weapon, the Sudarshan, rushed to punish him. He fled and the weapon followed him and cut him into two. However, since he had drunk the nectar, he continued to live in two parts - to be called Rahu and Ketu. His vengeance against the Sun and the Moon was never to end. He occasionally swallows one of them and vomits him out. That causes the eclipses.

With the pot of nectar empty, the damsel simply vanished. It was too late when the demons realised that they had been tricked.

During the churning of the ocean, Vishnu performed three roles - as Dhanvantari who brought not only the nectar but



also the Vedas containing the science of health and the knowledge of medicines, as the Tortoise who supported the Mount, and as Jaganmohini — the world-enchancing beauty who made it possible for the gods to get the nectar.

Dhanvantari is worshipped by



physicians as their deity.

One day, the sage Narada, while visiting Kailash in order to pay his obeisance to Lord Siva, was heard singing the miracle performed by Vishnu as Jaganmohini. Goddess Parvati felt amused to be told that Vishnu could assume a form which so easily befooled the demons. Narada asserted that there was nobody who would not be spellbound by the beauty that was Jaganmohini. Parvati expressed Her feeling of amusement and curiosity to Lord Siva. Both, riding their bull, went to Golok, the abode of Vishnu. "We're here to

have a glimpse of your power as Jaganmohini."

"Well, I assume different forms to serve different purposes. That cannot interest you," said Vishnu. The very next moment they saw a charming damsel standing at some distance, a lotus in her hand. Without a word, Siva walked towards her. In no time both disappeared in the infinite space. Surprised, Parvati returned to Kailash alone. The gods enjoyed the beautiful form Vishnu had taken and Siva's self-forgetful conduct. Narada followed the two, playing the Raga Shivaranjani on his Veena.

Jaganmohini led Siva through several spheres of heaven back to Kailash. There the damsel changed into Vishnu. "My sister," Vishnu told Parvati who stood rather puzzled, "here's your husband."

Siva grew conscious of the great and irresistible power of Vishnu called the Maya. Nobody can rise above the spell of Maya.

Years later, an emanation of Vishnu was born as the son of a great sage named Kardama and his wife Devahuti. Known as Kapila, he practised severe penance even as a child and grew famous as a wise sage. When the young sage decided to leave home for the forest in order to remain absorbed



in meditation, his mother felt very sad. Kapila enlightened her with his wise words which are famous as the philosophy of Samkhya.

Kapila remained engrossed in meditation in a cave in the nether world. An illustrious king, Sagara, decided to perform a special Yajna. He sent a horse which was to wander through many a land and return to its master. If nobody detained it, the Yajna would be successful.

Indra feared that if the rare Yajna would conclude successfully, Sagara might grow powerful enough to claim from him the position of the king of gods! He managed to steal the horse when those who were guarding it were not alert. He led it to the hermitage of Kapila and tied it to a tree there.

The missing horse created a great commotion at the court of King Sagara. He ordered his sons, a thousand in number, to search every nook and corner of the earth

and recover the lost animal.

His sons looked for the horse everywhere. Unable to locate it on the earth, they entered the nether world and, after a long search, found it in front of Kapila's cave. Mad with the success of their mission, they created a hullabaloo and accused Kapila of stealing the horse.

Kapila woke up from his trance and angrily looked at the unruly





crowd. At once, all the thousand princes were reduced to ashes.

Three generations later, a great prince of the dynasty, Bhagiratha, appeased the sage and learnt the secret of resurrecting his grand sires. He was told that he must bring the sacred Ganga flowing in the heavens down to the earth and make it flow over the ashes.

Bhagiratha prayed to the spirit of the Ganga to agree to come down on the earth. She consented to oblige him. But the earth might not be able to bear the impact of the mighty fall from the heavens. Bhagiratha prayed to Lord Siva, who agreed to bear the fall on His head.

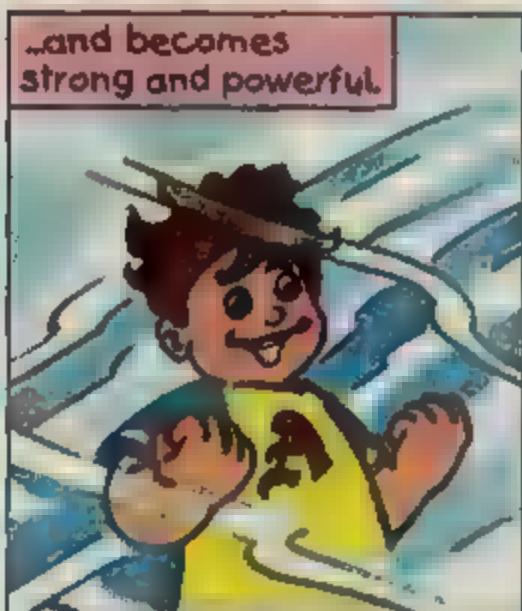
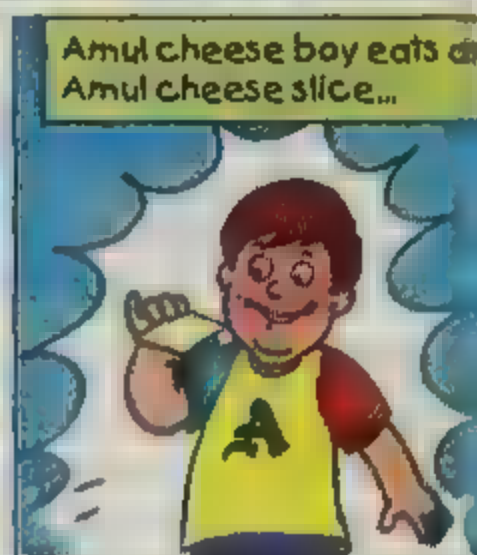
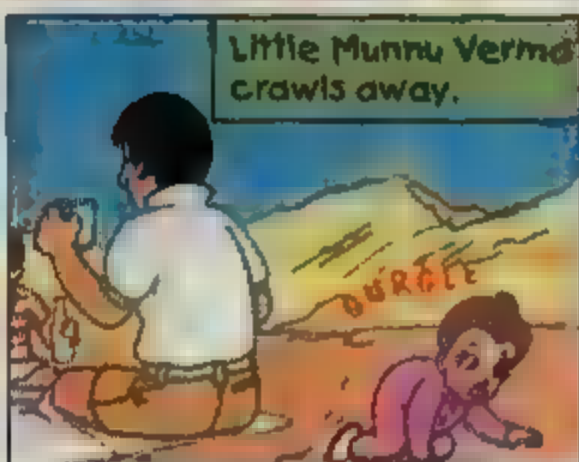
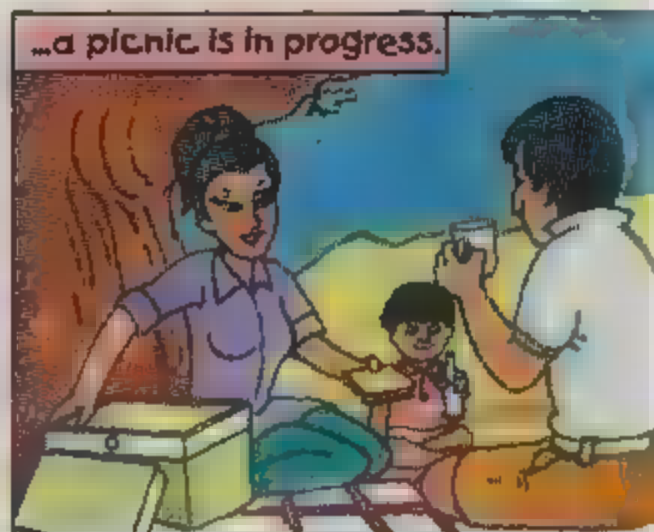
Thus did the heavenly Ganga come down to the earth — at first descending on Siva's head and then slowly flowing down to the earth. Shiva became known as Gangadhara — one who held the Ganga.

Once again, Vishnu had to be incarnated on the earth for the sake of two of His faithful servants. It happened like this : The four sons of Brahma—Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatsujat, and Sanatkumar—came to meet Vishnu. The Lord's two servants who guarded Golok, refused to let them in, for, the four looked like ordinary boys. Failing to impress upon the guards that Vishnu would only be too happy to see them, the four brothers, in their disgust, said as the guards behaved like demons, they deserved to be born as demons.

The commotion reached the ears of Vishnu and Lakshmi. They came out and received the four visitors cordially. But, by then, they had already cast a curse on the two guards which could not be undone.

**(To continue)**

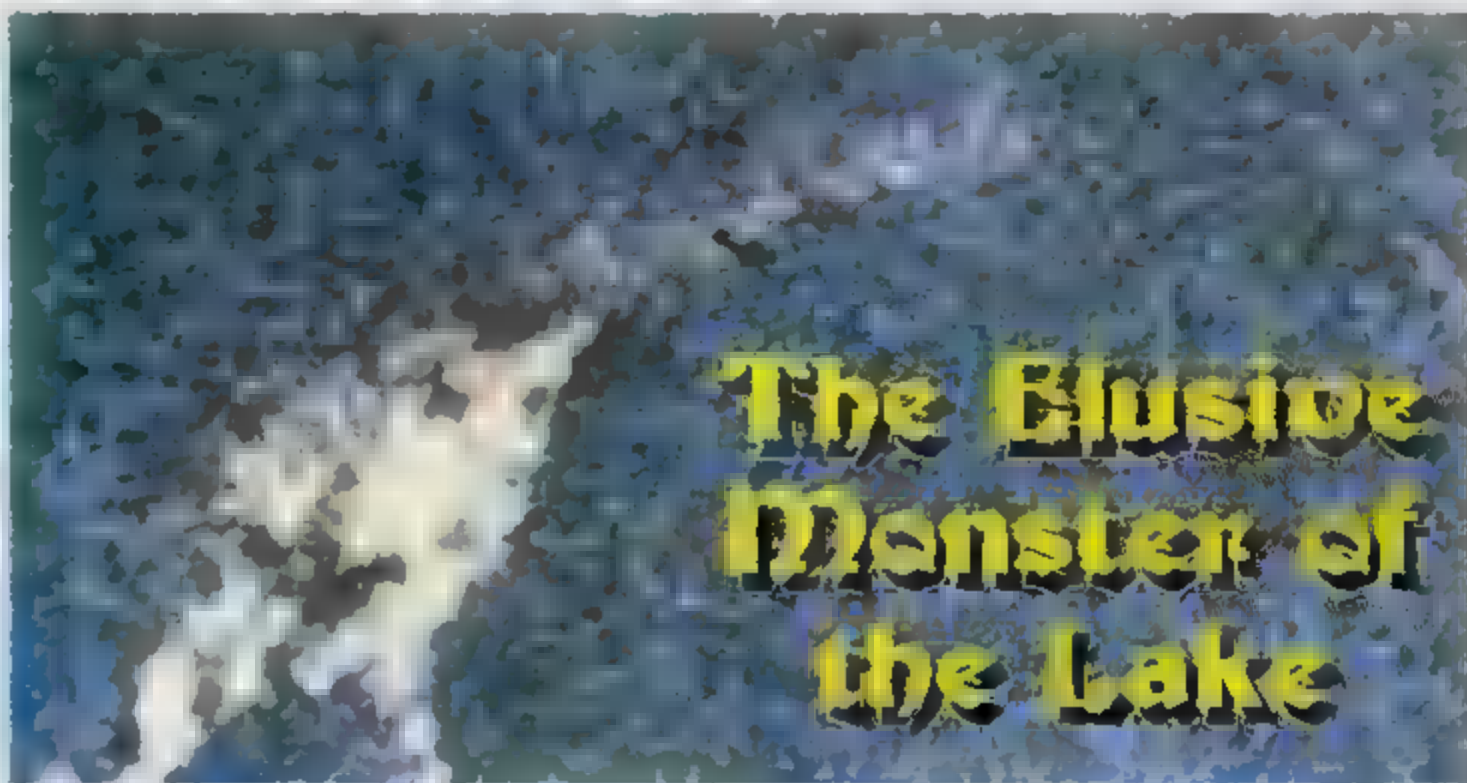




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Pic. courtesy : Reader's Digest's Mysteries of the Unexplained

*The closest snapshot of the Loch Ness monster ever taken.*

"Go thou no further nor touch the man. Go back at once!" commanded Saint Columba, as a fearsome - looking creature inched its way towards a defenseless man swimming in a lake. The story goes that "on hearing the Saint's word, the monster was terrified and fled away." This happened in A.D. 565.

The lake where the saint saved the helpless man from the clutches of a "very odd looking beast, something like a huge frog, only it was not a frog" is none other than Loch Ness, loch in Scottish meaning lake. It is the most beautiful and largest body of fresh water in Scotland. It spans a length of about 23 miles, breadth approximately 2 miles at its widest point, and fathoms a depth of 754 ft in the middle. The lake is drained by the river Ness and is reportedly the home

of the so-called Loch Ness monster, which has since become a legend, as its existence still remains an enigma.

Scores of curious visitors frequent the shores of the lake and gaze onto its placid waters, hoping to catch a glimpse of its unusual inhabitant that Saint Columba is supposed to have sighted nearly 1,435 years ago. In early 1933, Mr. George Spicer and Mrs. Spicer were driving home to London along the south bank of Loch Ness when, suddenly, they saw "an enormous animal rolling and

plunging on the surface of the lake". Later, they described the creature as a "loathsome sight" which looked like "a huge snail with a long neck." This eyewitness account was widely reported by the media, and the modern legend of the Loch Ness monster came into being



and has continued to make occasional headlines all over the world for more than 60 years.

"It was mid-May 1934," recounts Alex Campbell, a retired officer and local journalist, "I was looking across the water and, heavens, there was the terrific upsurge about 200 to 250 yards distant. And this huge neck appeared, six feet at least above the water, with a small head that kept turning nervously. As soon as the bow of a trawler appeared, the creature saw it and, swoosh, for heaven's sake what a dive!" Mr. Campbell reported 17 more sightings during the 40 years he had lived and worked by the lakeside.

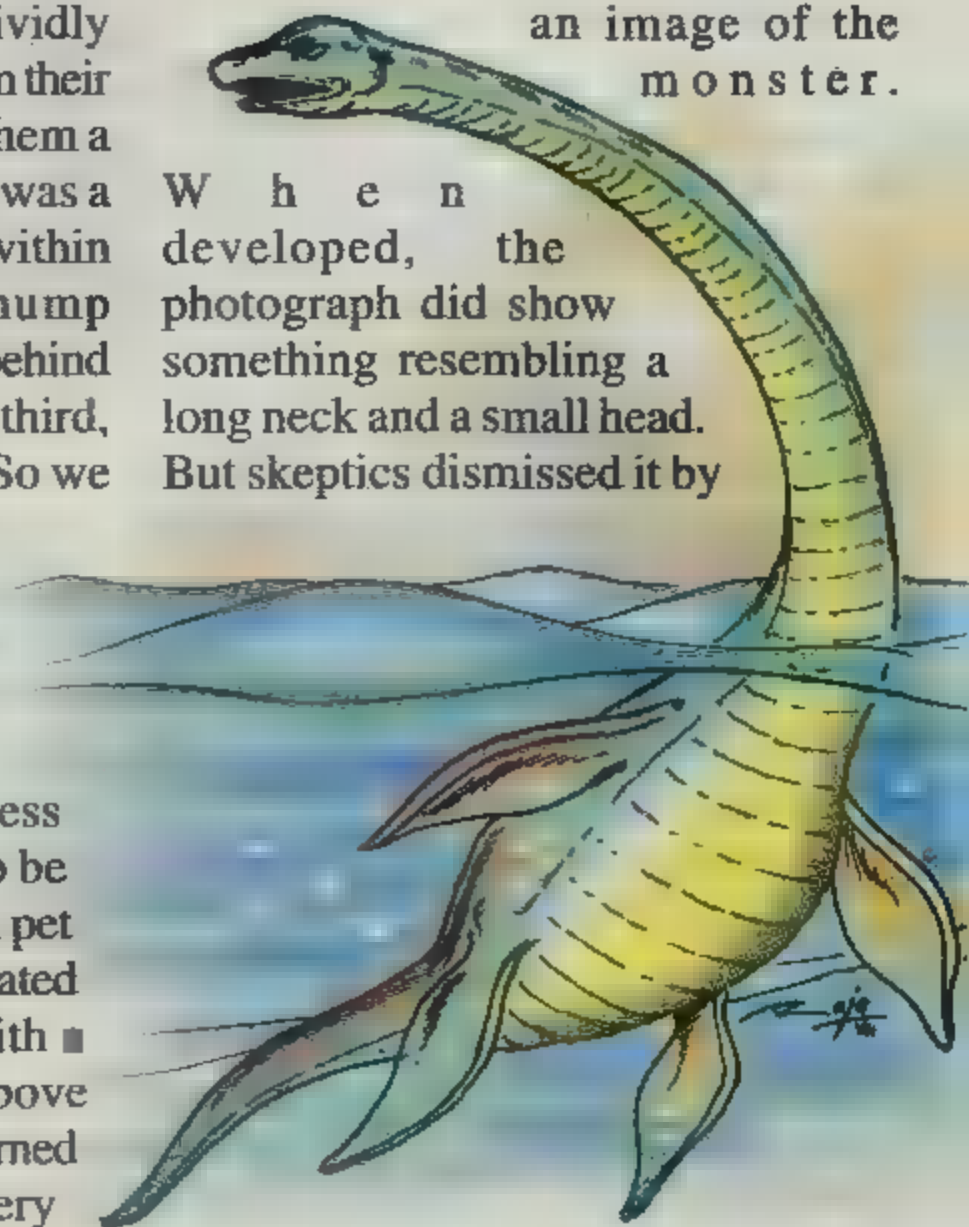
Some elderly ladies thus vividly described what they once saw from their bedroom window which gave them a gorgeous view of the lake. "...it was a huge hump in the water. Then within seconds another, smaller, hump appeared, a hundred yards or so behind the other. ...for heaven's sake, a third, even smaller, hump was there. So we agreed that it was a family of them, with the huge hump being the daddy, the middle one the mother, and the wee one in the rear the baby."

So "Nessie", as the Loch Ness monster affectionately came to be known, became an international pet overnight. The animal was estimated to measure 25 to 30 ft long, with a number of humps protruding above the surface like the hull of an upturned boat. It had a small head and a very

slender neck. Newspapers sent their correspondents to Scotland, and radio programmes were interrupted to flash the latest news from Loch Ness. Even a British circus offered a reward of 20,000 pounds, the New York zoo 500 dollars, and a well-known company a mammoth 1 million pounds, all for the capture of Nessie, not dead but alive. Writers, photo-graphers, scientists, and others waited expectantly for the creature to make its appearance. But alas, dear Nessie proved to be as elusive as ever.

In 1934, a British surgeon, R. Kenneth Wilson, pointing his camera at the Loch, was lucky enough to capture an image of the monster.

When developed, the photograph did show something resembling a long neck and a small head. But skeptics dismissed it by





reasoning that the picture could be that of a swimming deer or a duck or an otter. Or, could it be "a mischievous play of sunlight on the rippled waters"? Nevertheless, the image has since become a logo for the mystery.

Since 1933, there have been more than 4,000 reported sightings of the Loch Ness monster. Surprisingly, most of the eyewitnesses were sober and level-headed people. In June 1965, Ian Cameron, a retired police officer, while fishing on the shore of Loch Ness saw "...a large, black object — a whale-like object, going from infinity up, and came round onto a block end - and it submerged, to reappear a matter of seconds later." He emphatically claims, "I saw it, and nothing can take that away." In April 1976, two men, one a

sergeant and the other a constable, while driving along the shore have reported having seen in the churning waters two large fins, but no head nor body.

In September 1990, Val Moffat, who has lived on the shores of Loch Ness for eleven years, saw a large lump that "looked like ■ boat that had turned upside down" and "it was a mixture of browns, greens, sludgy sort of colours. Must have seen it three or four times, and the last time I looked, it was gone!" She then thought to herself: "Oh, there's Nessie. ...That's not just Nessie, that's

got to be the Loch Ness Monster that everybody has spent thousands of pounds searching for..."

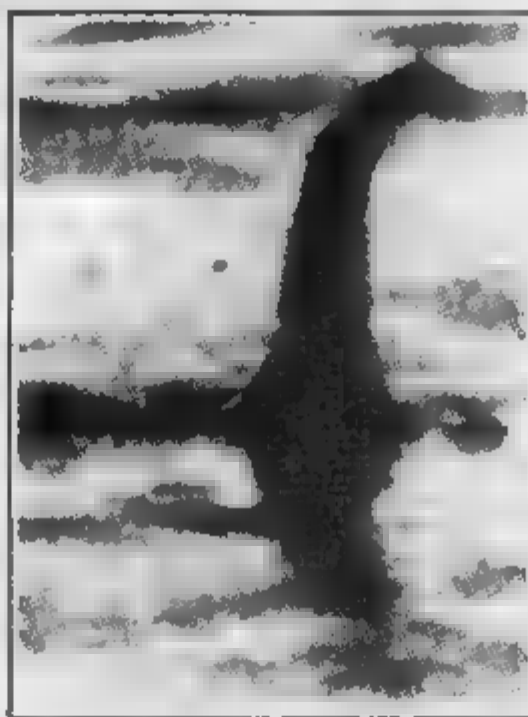
Gary Campbell, an accountant who lives in the region of Loch Ness, claims to have seen the monster as recently as the 14th of March 1996. "I looked up at the Loch and out of the corner of my eye, I saw this black hump come out of the water. I thought 'Heavens!' and looked at it again, and sure enough it

went back into the water and came back out again and back down. I thought— immediately sort of looked ahead and thought — 'I've actually seen it!' Good grief, after all these years being here and then thinking 'Heavens above!' you know, I've actually seen it!"

For years, the Loch Ness monster has inspired a host of books,

films, research papers, etc. Scientific teams from various reputed institutions have tried to ascertain the existence of the creature by using the most sophisticated methods and technology. But alas, they have been unable to furnish enough evidence. However, G. K. Chesterton very aptly says: "Many a man has been hanged on less evidence than there is for the Loch Ness Monster."

Then, what is it that thousands of eyewitnesses so confidently claim to have seen in the calm, blue waters of Loch Ness?



# Let us know



## ■ **What is ■ mirage?**

- Pallavi Joshi, Kanpur

Mirage is a common phenomenon in the desert, where an optical illusion is created and one feels there is a collection of water, like ■ lake or a pond, close by. But as one approaches the place, the sight of water only recedes! Such illusion is caused by refraction. When light passes through an atmosphere which has an unusual density of air, there is a sudden change in the direction of travel. One can see things straight, or sometimes inverted where they do not really exist. Not only water, but even hills and hamlets can be seen, though in actuality, there would not be any.

## ■ **Which is the tallest statue in the world?**

- Sukumara Menon, Alwaye

In Volgograd, a town in Russia, on a hillock stands a statue 270 ft high. It is called *The Motherland*. The figure is shown as holding a sword. The height is measured from the base to the tip of the sword. The statue of Gomateshwara in Sravanabelagola, Karnataka, is nearly 60 ft tall - the tallest monolith in the world.

## ✱ **Is there any difference between climate and weather?**

- Priti Shinde, Pune

When we say that Kashmir has a cold climate, we mean, for most of the days of the year, the climate remains cold. Climate is the condition of a country or a place with regard to temperature, humidity, and other factors. On the contrary, weather denotes the atmospheric condition of a specified period (generally 24 hours). On the TV or radio, one hears the expression, 'the weather will remain cloudy', or 'the weather will be generally dry' or 'there is a likelihood of heavy rain accompanied by thunder and lightning'. When this happens, one can hear people cursing, "What an awful weather!"

## ✱ **Who discovered magnet?**

- Bal Krishna Prusti, Puri

About 600 B.C., a Greek named Thales was surprised when he saw ■ piece of rock attracting iron to it. He called the rock 'magnetes' after the town of Magnes where the rock was found.



# Creative Contest

Given below is the beginning of a story; it has all the ingredients of turning out to be an interesting tale. But that 'creation' is in YOUR hands! You have to imagine the sequences — possible and probable — and give a finish to the story. Not only finish it, but think up a catchy title (heading), too. Remember, you have to do this exercise in 200 to 300 words — not less, not more. The best entry will get an attractive prize, and the entry will also be published in the magazine. The contest is meant for our young readers. Please remember to mention your name, age, class, name of school, and home address with PIN Code. Prove that YOU can write better than grown-ups; so, don't take their help!

Here goes the story:

Prince Pratap was being initiated into the rudiments of state administration, and he would soon be declared successor to the ageing King Marthand. One day, he put on ordinary clothes and went about the kingdom incognito for a first-hand assessment of the people's well being.

He had dismounted from his horse and was walking when one of his worn-out sandals was torn and he had to discard the pair, and walk barefoot. Before he had walked some distance, he stepped on a thorn. He tried his best, but was unable to pull it out. He sat down, hoping someone would come that way and he could seek help.

Before long, a farmer's daughter was passing by after taking food for her father. She saw the young man suppressing pain and looking rather helpless. On being told that he was struck with a thorn, she picked up another thorn and managed to remove the embedded thorn from the sole of the

foot. She also collected a few leaves, crushed them on her palm and made a paste. She then applied it from where the thorn had been removed. She tore a length of her sari and bandaged the foot.

"I'm grateful to you, sister," said the prince, now feeling greatly relieved. "In what way can I help you?"

"Learn to help yourself before thinking of helping me," said the girl. "It was only a thorn, but you looked perplexed!" she added with a giggle.

The prince found her bright and charming. He laughed and said, "That was because I've never walked barefoot before. And that was the first time a thorn had stuck on to my foot and I didn't know how to remove it. If you had not come to my help, I don't know what I would have done. Anyway, tell me what I can do for you."

"You speak as if you're a king," the girl giggled again. "You can very well make me a queen!"

Now let us presume that: 1. The prince does not disclose his real identity; 2. He is carried away by the girl's advice; 3. He gets an opportunity to help himself; 4. The young girl comes to know of the prince's adventure. The question remains: Does the prince make her his queen?

There you are! How will you complete the story? Remember to give a title; and write "Creative contest" on top of your entry. The closing date is 25 September 2000.

- Editor

## Answers to Discovery of India Quiz (August 2000) :

1. a) Aryabhatta, b) Amarnath in Kashmir, c) Nachiketa, d) Charvaka, Javali (not Satyakama Javali), and Goshala; e) Akbar introduced a new religious faith *Din-e-Elahi* which had few takers.
2. Ruru and Pramodvara

Among the entries received for the CREATIVE CONTEST (June 2000), the one sent by Ashwini R. Pedha (11 years - Class VII) of Ahmedabad has been chosen for a cash prize of Rs.100. The entry is printed in Italics.

The royal gardens of Ganganagar was always a lovely sight. It had so many fruit-bearing trees, and several flowering plants. The gardener treated each plant, each tree, as his own child and tended them with great care.

The garden abounded in monkeys, but unlike ordinary monkeys, they had a great fascination for flowers. They used to watch the gardener taking care of them. They never damaged the flower beds or plucked the flowers. Thus they became friendly with the gardener.

The need arose for the gardener to be away for one day. Who would water the plants in his absence? he thought and thought and ultimately, he struck upon an idea. He called a few of the monkeys and told them that they should undertake the job. They agreed. They had seen the watering cans, and they knew where water was available.

The next day, the monkeys turned out in full strength and began to water the plants. Their leader supervised the exercise from a distance. But, suddenly, he had a doubt. Were the plants getting enough water?

*He thought over the problem for a long time. He realised that by simply pouring water would not mean that the plant had been sufficiently watered. A verification whether the water had actually reached the roots might be a solution to the problem. He called his troupe and asked them to pull out each plant after watering it to find out whether the roots were wet. The monkeys went about pulling out each and every plant. Wherever they found water had not reached the tips, they were watered separately and the plant re-fixed to the ground.*

*Fortunately, the royal gardener finished his work sooner than he had expected and came back before it was dusk, instead of the next morning. The sight that greeted him was horrifying enough to make him swoon. The leader of the monkeys was, however, smiling, as though the job given to him had been done properly. He had the shock of his life when he found the gardener picking up a stick and aiming it at him threateningly. He made good his escape and the troupe raised their tails and followed him. From the high branches of the trees they peered down to see the gardener inspecting each plant - of course, without uprooting it.*

*The gardener regretted that he had all along a company of fools, and not friends, in the royal garden.*





# CHANDAMAMA

## ENRICH YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Answers to the quiz published in this issue will appear in the next issue. Meanwhile, try to find the answers yourself and enrich your knowledge of India's antiquity and heritage.



1. (a) Who is the great saint-philosopher who founded four monasteries in four corners of India hundreds of years ago, which are still running?
- (b) Who was the king who waged a war against a state but was so horrified at the sight of massacres and other kinds of violence the war caused that he changed into the greatest preacher of non-violence?
- (c) Who was the queen who became a saint-poet-singer and left her kingdom and mysteriously disappeared in a distant temple?
- (d) Which of the four Vedas contains principles of medical treatment?
- (e) Who is the sage who authored the *Principles of Rajayoga*?

The princess was most beautiful. The king was looking for a suitable bridegroom for her when the kings of two neighbouring states proposed to marry her. Both of them were powerful. Each threatened to invade the kingdom unless his proposal was accepted. Their armies advanced upon the kingdom. The helpless king did not know what to do. Somebody advised him to kill the princess as a solution to the problem. But the king refused to do so. However, the princess, who learnt about her father's predicament, took poison and died. Who was the princess? To which kingdom did she belong? Who were the two rival suitors?







# TOWARDS BETTER ENGLISH



## THE HELPFUL HYPHEN

Hyphen is one of the most helpful tools for a writer to convey her or his message more clearly. When an author writes "thirty inch diameter circles", the reader does not know what she or he means. But if the hyphen is properly used, the reader knows exactly what the author has in mind. Thus, "thirty **inch-diameter** circles" means, there are 'thirty circles' and each one is 'one inch' in diameter. But "**thirty-inch** diameter circles" will mean there is 'more than one circle' and they are all thirty inches in diameter.

The hyphen is also used to prevent any wrong understanding. That is, a great-uncle is not the same as a great uncle. Similarly, you recover the loss from a fire, but you can re-cover the article that was damaged in the fire.

The proper use of a hyphen makes a sentence express the very thoughts of the writer. For example, "a fabricated, galvanized steel table" is not the same as "a fabricated **galvanized-steel** table". In the former, the steel table was galvanized after it was fabricated. In the latter, the table was constructed from a steel that was galvanized before fabrication.

The hyphen is also used to distinguish between two meanings. For example, "a better burnished sleeve" means the sleeve itself is better than another burnished sleeve. But the expression "a **better-burnished** sleeve" means, the burnishing job is better than what has been done on another sleeve.

One of the most misused expressions is vice premier or vice president. When it is written without hyphen, it implies that he or she is vice, meaning bad, whereas what is obviously meant is 'vice-premier' or 'vice-president' - meaning, somebody who is acting in place of the premier or president, or is next in rank to the premier or president.

It may be very difficult to get people agree on the proper use of hyphens. But one rule governing the use of hyphen needs to be changed. That is, the use of hyphen at the end of a line of copy when the intent is to use a hyphenated expression. For example, ballot-box is a hyphenated word. If the line ends with ballot, instead of putting the hyphen at the end of the line, place it on the next line before the word 'box'. This would inform the reader that it was the writer's intent to use a hyphenated word—not a solid word. The hyphen at the end of a line of copy would then be used for only one purpose and that is when the hyphenated word is meant to be a solid word, but the word would not fit the allocated line length. Again, for example, the word balloting, which is a solid word, can be broken as ball- (with the hyphen) and continued as 'oting' in the next line. This would be helpful especially when using new, coined words.

Nityapriya S.



# PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? You may write it on a competition post card and mail it to

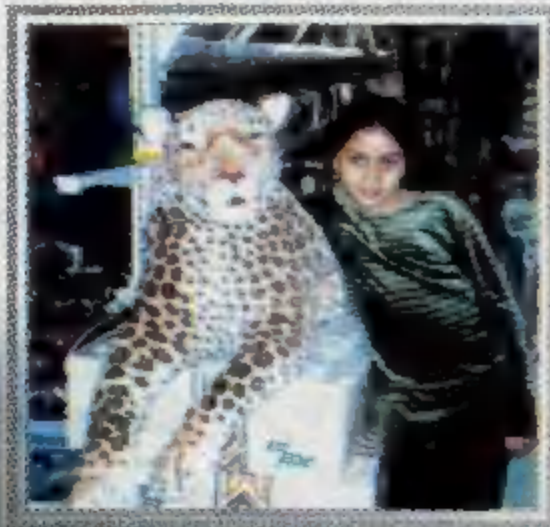


PHOTO CAPTION  
CONTEST

**CHANDAMAMA**

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to reach us by the 25th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.



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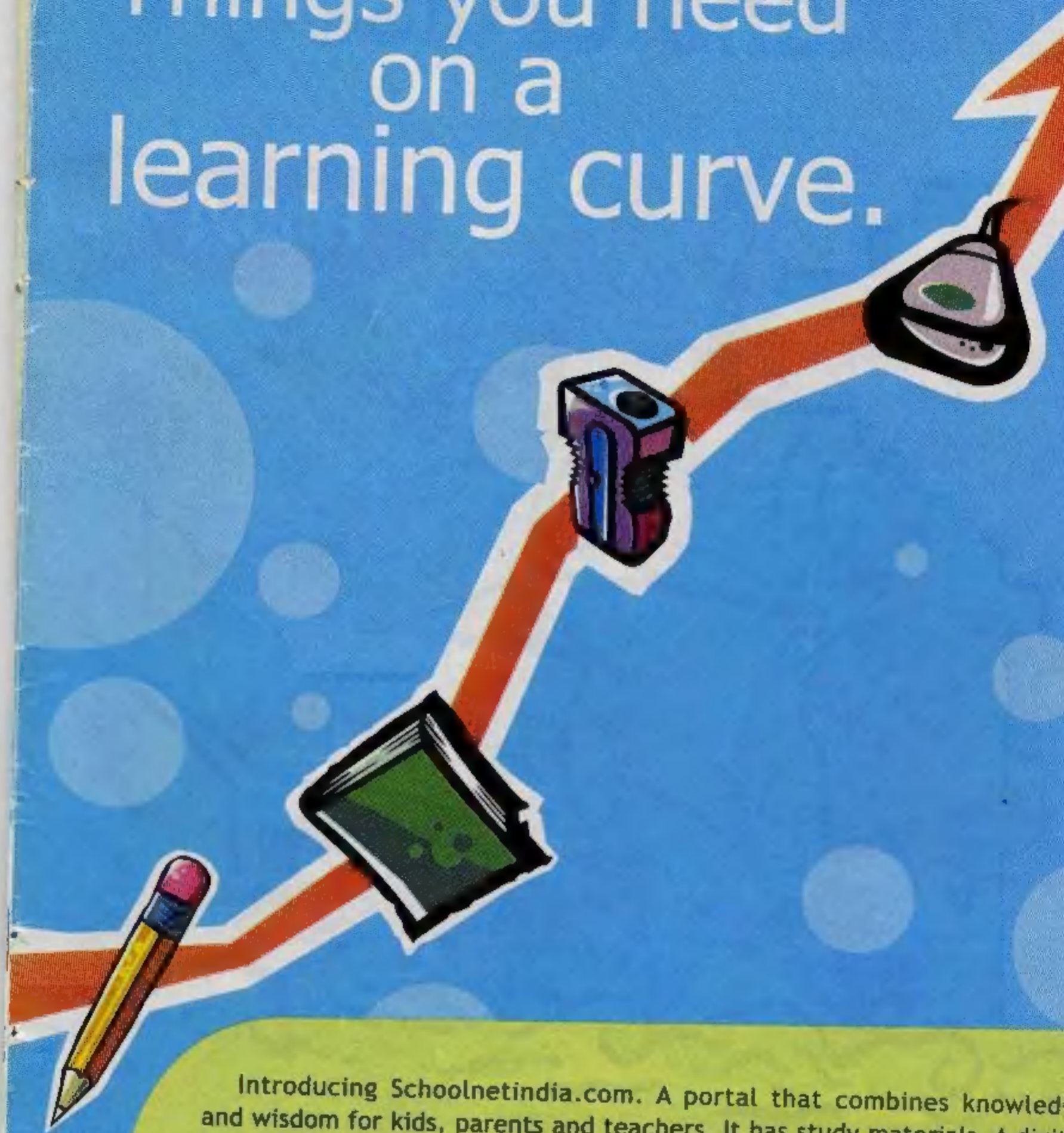
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